

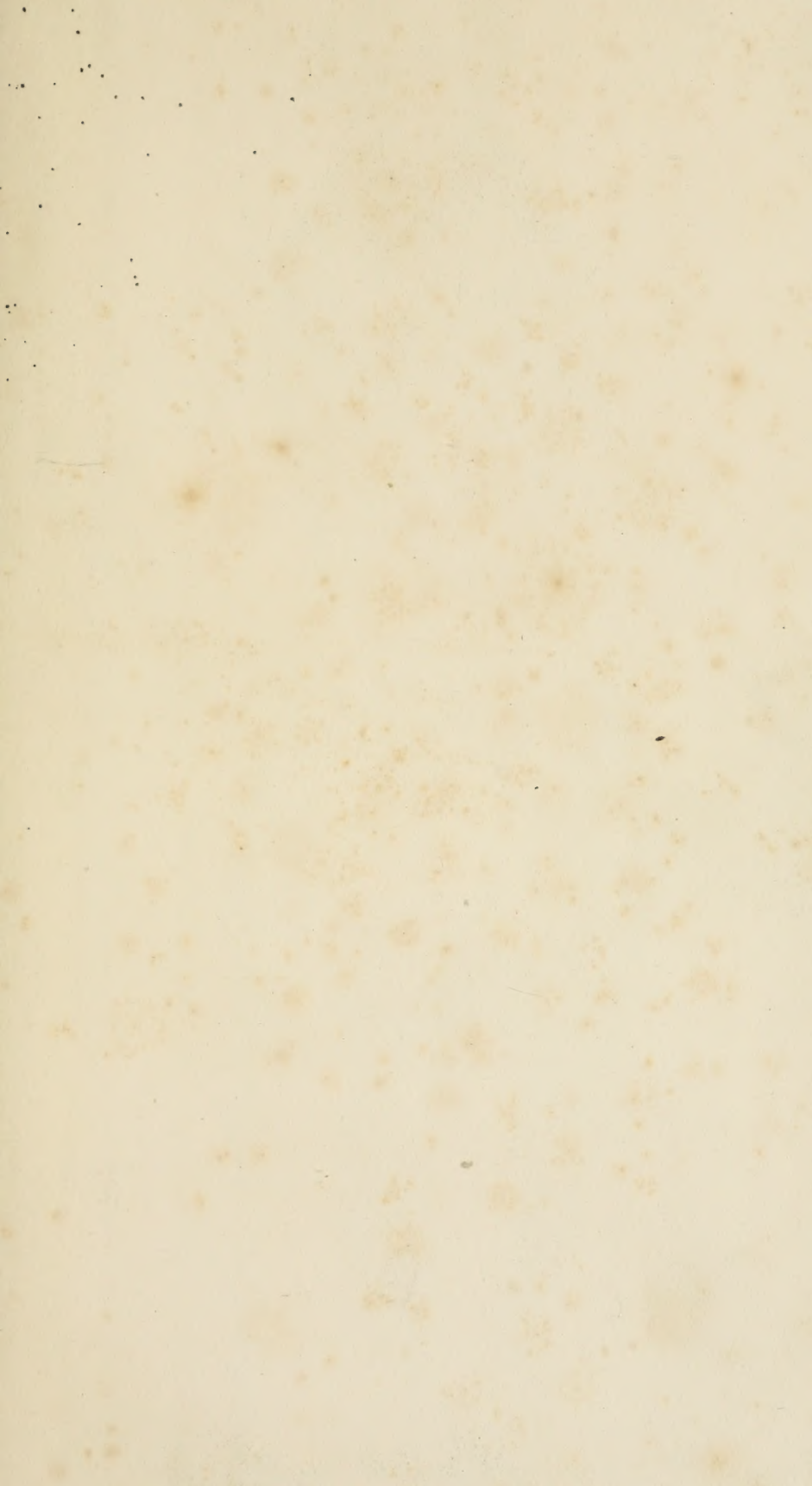
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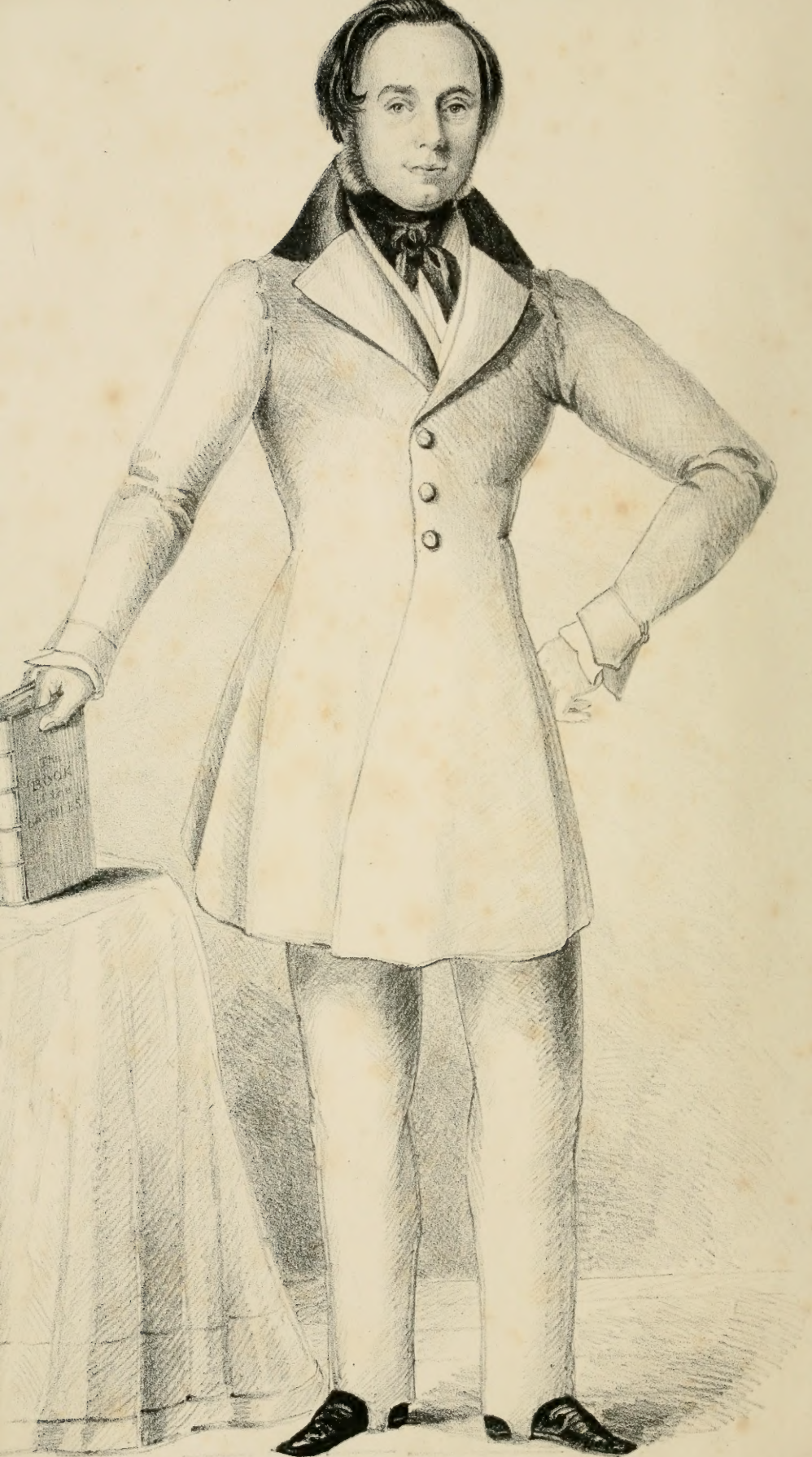
With the Author's

Compts.

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G.R. WYTHEN BAXTER, ESQ.;



## BOOK OF THE BASTILES.

OR,

# THE HISTORY

OF THE WORKING OF

# THE NEW POOR-LAW.

BY

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER,

AUTHOR OF "HUMOUR AND PATHOS," ETC.; AND A LINEAL DESCENDANT OF  
THE CELEBRATED NONCONFORMIST, RICHARD BAXTER,  
AUTHOR OF THE "SAINTS' REST," ETC.

..... "Scorn not my words; beware you slight them not! I feel how *noble are the motives* which now animate my thoughts. Who could not feel as I do, I condemn:—who, feeling so, yet would not act as I shall—I despise."—SHERIDAN'S PIZARRO.

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AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1841.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE author's reason for calling into existence such a work as the one now presented to the public, was, the conception that a publication, similar in its tendency, was not only, under the present dispensation of affairs, required, but imperatively demanded; and that as much to perpetuate and hand down to the appreciation of posterity the humane exertions of the New Poor-Law Opposition, as to justify, by a condensed (though necessarily comprehensive) and interesting selection of their sayings and doings, their conduct in the eyes of the existent generation. In fact, the author deemed there was need in our libraries of a book of national reference—a standard history of Anti-New Poor-Law eloquence and benevolence, and of Pro-New Poor-Law enormities and horrors—a book which our children's children hereafter, when the abominable enactment shall be repealed (as repealed it must be), might consult and wonder o'er as a chronicle that such things were, and, in closing the leaves, bless God that such things were no longer.

The *Book of the Bastiles* is composed not only for the present generation, but for posterity (and to both, surely, such a work will be useful and acceptable)—not only to excite the abhorrence of future beings for an atrocious legislative decree and its administrators, but, at the same time, to show those who shall fill our vacant places, when we shall be no longer seen, that there were not wanting men—and fine, noble-minded men too—notwithstanding the outrageous inhumanity which prevailed at the period—who, in the face of arbitrary power, persecution, death, and neglect and contempt worse to brook than death, dared be honest, dared be humane, and oppose it. In other words, the *Book of the Bastiles* is intended to certify to Englishmen, yet unborn, that the same age which produced a Brougham, a Russell, a Malthus, and a “Marcus,” nurtured and reared also, as if in extenuation, a Stanhope, an Oastler, a Fielden, and a Walter,—a General Johnson, and a Bishop of Exeter, as excellent as eloquent—benevolent—a constant opponent of the “boon.”

But the paramount reason for publishing the *Book of the Bastiles* was, the urgent necessity in the present alarming crisis—a crisis mainly attributable to the operation of such harsh, biting statutes as the New Poor-Law—of calling the attention of the upper and middle classes to the inhumanity, unchristianity, injustice, and political and social danger of the continued administration of the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act in England and Wales.

Had there been no *lettre de cachet*, the revolutionary *Marseillaise* would never have been tuned in retribution, and Louis XVI. would have died in his bed, and not on the block. Had there been no New Poor-Law, the name of Chartist would never have been heard; nor would Birmingham have been heated with fire and fury, or Newport have run red with the gore of Britons from the hills. These are truisms that need no further parley. That Rural Police, and increased taxation, are the "Act's" necessary assistants on the Government's side, and stack-firing, and the manufacturing of pikes, its natural accompaniments on the side of the governed, are facts, alas! equally incontrovertible. The New Poor-Law and good government and good order cannot exist together; the former must and will destroy the other two.

The contents of the *Book of the Bastiles* are especially addressed to the sympathies of noblemen, gentlemen, and tradesmen, and those who have the power and means to right the wrong; and it is sincerely to be desired, that the perusal of its pages will be instrumental in destroying the apathy—cruel and criminal—with which the generality of the said noblemen, gentlemen, and tradesmen, &c., have too long regarded the wholesale and extensive extermination and desperation of their poorer brethren, which, since the introduction of the Somerset-house edict, have taken place. May its pages have such beneficial result, and be the means, now political tempests are raging and roaring, and almost overwhelming, of saving our country—

“ ——— a brave vessel,  
Who ‘has,’ no doubt, *some* noble creatures in her,”

from being wrecked and dashed all to pieces!

With regard to the letters and other articles (exclusive of the contents of the compiled portions) forming the *Book of the Bastiles*, it is proper to report, that, with some few exceptions, they have all appeared before, at different periods, in the columns of the *Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, and other London papers of note and celebrity; and likewise have been frequently reprinted in many of the most distinguished and popular of the provincial press; besides in pamphlets, handbills, &c.

“To be mentioned with praise by a fine writer,” says *St. Evremond*, “is a patent for esteem in all future ages, and an exemption from contempt and oblivion!” It may, therefore, perhaps be pardoned the confession—the owning the “soft impeachment”—that the letters and articles in question have, whenever they made their appearance in type, been received with very encomiastic approval by editors, politicians, and men of literature. The following are a few (selected on account of their brevity) favourable “notices” of them and their author: of which it would be untrue to assert he is not proud:

“We cannot part with the author of the *Poor-Law Papers*, without thanking him

cordially for the warm, earnest, and eloquent defence of the English peasantry, which he has made against the griping and grasping Whig Commissioners. We wish that, with a voice of thunder, we could echo his complaints, and make them be heard in the very heart of the Cabinet and the Queen's palace."—*Editor of the "Metropolitan Conservative Journal,"* Sept. 2, 1837.

"We are indebted to Mr. Baxter for a series of eloquent and spirit-stirring letters on the subject of the iniquitous New Poor-Law-Bill."—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal,* May 19, 1838.

"We refer to some former articles on the New Poor-Law in the *Conservative*, which never have been, and, we honestly believe, never will be satisfactorily answered."—*Ibid.*, July 7, 1838.

"Baxter is the author of a host of *excellent* papers on the New Poor-Law."—*Oastler's Letter in the "Champion,"* Nov. 3, 1839.

"The Author of a poem entitled '*Sunday*,' takes the liberty of sending two copies to Mr. Baxter, whose manly efforts on behalf of the suffering poor of England entitle him to the sincere thanks of every well-wisher of his country."—*Dated from Calais,* Feb. 25, 1838.

"I thank you for the efforts you have made to support the cause of the poor and needy. The satisfaction arising from the performance of duty will be your best solace."—*Extract of a Letter from John Fielden, Esq., M.P., to the Author, dated London,* Feb. 2, 1838.

"God has given you a heart, and a head, and the pen of a ready writer."—*Extract of a Letter from Richard Oastler, Esq., to the Author, dated Fitzby Hall, near Huddersfield,* June 6, 1838.

"The part you have taken in opposing the infamous New Poor-Law, does credit alike to your head and heart; and the remembrance of your patriotic course on this question will be always cherished by me with feelings of pleasure."—*Extract of a Letter from John Fielden, Esq., M.P., to the Author, dated Todmorden, near Rochdale,* Oct. 7, 1838.

"It would be very gratifying to you, as well as to myself, and would be very serviceable to the cause, if a local Anti-Poor-Law Association were, under your auspices, to be established at Hereford; and, I trust, that you would, in that case, be its Chairman, and become a member of the Metropolitan Association."—*Extract of a Letter from Earl Stanhope to the Author, dated 14, Great Stanhope-street, London,* Feb. 14, 1838.

"Your talents and respectability are well known to me."—*Extract of a Letter from Thomas Attwood, Esq., (late M.P. for Birmingham), dated Jersey,* Sept. 7, 1840.

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The following excerpts, too, from kind, complimentary, and courteous letters and publications, &c., received by the author, from all parts of the United Kingdom, whilst he was engaged in the composition of this work, he hopes, as they show how generally his undertaking was approved, and the New Poor-Law abhorred, he may also be excused for relating here. Indeed, as they are mostly from well-known and distinguished opponents of the Act, they may be considered as his credentials, or letters of recommendation to the public, which it becomes him to deliver, and would be false modesty on his part to withhold.

"All who wish to repeal the New Poor-Law will patronize and forward the interest of the above work."—*Richardson's "Annual Black Book" for 1841.*

"The poor already owe you much for your past exertions in their behalf; and the friends of the poor will welcome the appearance of a work which will supply them with ample materials for the wise and more effectual application of their zeal in so righteous and blessed a cause."—*The Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens, Chester Castle,* Sept. 4, 1840.

"My friend and true friend, Mr. Oastler, told me of your zeal. May God prosper



all those who, for fear and love of his name, are endeavouring to do justice to the oppressed."—*The Rev. G. S. Bull*, Bradford, July 23, 1840.

"The interest taken in the welfare of the poor entitle the author to considerable credit for the manly exposure of the poor-exterminating spirit of the present age, and ought to be an encouragement to him to go on and prosper in the valuable work which he has undertaken."—*Sheffield Iris*, April 28, 1840.

"Wishing you the utmost success in your undertaking, and thanking you for having engaged in such a task, though I am assured that you feel such a work, as I do myself, a pleasure rather than otherwise."—*The Rev. F. H. Maberley*, Bourne, near Caxton, Cambridgeshire, August 19, 1840.

"I sincerely wish your very praiseworthy efforts success."—*Mr. Alderman Scales*, London, Oct. 21, 1840.

"With much pleasure I shall recommend your proposed work as far as possible, believing it must be useful."—*Mr. John Day*, Author of "*Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law*," &c., Southwark, August 13, 1840.

"To your work I wish all possible success."—*Daniel Whittle Harvey, Esq.*, late M.P. for Southwark, August 14, 1840.

"The publication of your work, I hope, may assist in restoring the rights of the people, against whom I regret to see so large a proportion of the upper and middle classes."—*James Wilkinson, Esq.*, 138, Leadenhall-street, London, Sept. 23, 1840.

"I will request my friends to take your work on the New Poor-Law... Your work will, I trust, be out before Parliament, when this Poor-Law question must come before the House of Commons."—*General Johnson, M.P.*, Stamford, Nov. 16, 1840.

"Best wishes for your success as a writer."—*Editor of the "Sussex Express"*, Dec. 23, 1840.

"I admire your zeal in behalf of what you suppose will remove an oppressive evil."—*John Gully, Esq.*, late M.P. for Pontefract, Oct. 18, 1840.

"Your praiseworthy work."—*Thomas Clutton Salt, Esq.*, of Birmingham, Oct. 7, 1840.

"Such a work as you propose to publish is very desirable, and I shall be very glad to support it by subscription, or in any other way that may be agreed on. Such a book should be always at hand in every library, the details of which may serve to guard posterity against falling into the errors of our day."—*John Fielden, Esq.*, M.P., March 22, 1839.

"Your work cannot be otherwise than valuable to the public."—*Dr. Fletcher*, Bury, Lancashire, Sept. 18, 1840.

"I am very glad you are going to publish the work you mention."—*W. Roworth, Esq.*, Mayor of Nottingham, and Author of "*Observations on the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham*," August 19, 1840.

"I heartily wish you every possible success."—*John Bowen, Esq.*, Author of the "*Bridgewater Case*," &c., Bridgewater, July 23, 1840.

"Let me assure you, that your forthcoming work shall have my best attention whenever it shall make its appearance."—*T. Grimsditch, Esq.*, M.P. for Macclesfield, July 23, 1840.

"I highly approve of your undertaking, and consider it a most necessary step in the further discussion of the subject, which must at length lead to the abandonment of that un-British and un-Christian measure."—*Rev. J. D. Schomberg*, Master of Stoke Grammar School, Leicestershire, and Author of the "*Theocratic Philosophy of English History*," &c., Sept. 8, 1840.

"To your work I wish all manner of success."—*John Bell, Esq.*, of the "*Morning Herald*," Oct. 24, 1840.

"I wish your work every success. Having seen some of your writings, I feel no doubt whatever of the ability with which the work will be executed."—*W. S. Villiers Sankey, Esq.*, late Candidate for Marylebone, Sept. 10, 1840.

"If my best wishes could help you, yours would turn out a glorious work."—*Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens*, Chester Castle, Sept. 21, 1840.

"I will do all in my power to recommend it to the notice of the Anti-Poor-Law Association."—*James Duncombe, Esq.*, Hon. Sec. to the Metropolitan Anti-Poor-Law Association, Oct. 9, 1840.

"With respect to the publication which you are about to make of this most abomi-

nable and atrocious measure, the falsely called Poor-Law Amendment Act, you have my most sincere wishes for success."—*Thomas Boxer, Esq., Barrister, London, Sept., 1840.*

"I hope you will succeed in awakening those feelings of sympathy for our poorer brethren, which appear to be fast vanishing from among us."—*W. D. Saull, Esq., Aldersgate-street, London, Sept. 8, 1840.*

"I wish you success in your undertaking, and offer you my cordial thanks for the philanthropy of your proceedings."—*Charles Wing, Esq., Surgeon, Author of "The Evils of the Factory System," &c., Regent's Park, London, Sept. 30, 1840.*

"I am highly gratified with your design; it is one I have long sought for; and depend upon it I will give it my utmost support."—*Mr. R. J. Richardson, Author of the "Annual Black Book," &c., Lancaster Castle, Sept. 15, 1840.*

"I can assure you I feel as anxious and as much interested about your bantling as yourself, and so ought every good, benevolent, philanthropic, and patriotic man."—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts, Bath, Oct. 23, 1840.*

"It has given me sincere pleasure, that there is still so much virtue left in England, as that even *one individual* shall take up arms against that blot on England's character—that most atrocious and treasonable of all Parliamentary enactments, the ever-accursed New Poor-Law.....Wishing you all the success which your laudable endeavours to support the cause of the helpless (God help them!) deserve, I have the honour to subscribe myself, dear Sir, your obedient servant (and friend in so noble a cause)."—*Colin Mackenzie, Esq., 85, Drury-lane, London, Sept. 25, 1840.*

"I do sincerely hope you will meet with success in the undertaking, and that the work will prove an armoury of keen-edged, well-tempered weapons to furnish the people's champions withal, against the Malthusian oppressive crew, who have said in their hearts, We will defy the experiences of past ages, and the Holy Scriptures; we will make the poor to cease out of the land, or we will punish them by imprisonment, starvation, and total bereavement of all domestic comforts."—*Mr. W. Willis, Manchester, Sept. 14, 1840.*

"Wishing you success."—*John Bridgeford, Esq., "Iris" Office, Sheffield, Sept. 23, 1840.*

"I saw and admired a letter inserted (I think) in the *Northern Star* newspaper, addressed by you to Lord Brougham, some time ago, and gave my bookseller orders to procure it.....The work is a thing I have long wished some person of ability would undertake, and I hope it will not only realize the expectations of the subscribers, but also yield you a sufficient remuneration for the time and labour required for its completion."—*J. Clarkson, Esq., Bradford, Yorkshire, Sept. 10, 1840.*

"Sincerely wishing you every success, and that one of the most iniquitous Acts ever designed by knaves, and passed by legislators, looking more to their own relief, than that of their own tenants, the widow, the fatherless, and all the wretched inmates of every hovel in the land—may be finally overthrown by such efforts as your own."—*R. Cort, Esq., Walbrook, London, Oct. 19, 1840.*

"I rejoice at the patronage given to a work which will expose the iniquitous proceedings which arise out of the Poor-Law (miscalled) Amendment-Act."—*Thomas Todd, Esq., Dewsbury, Sept. 9, 1840.*

"In the aim and purpose of your work, I cordially sympathise."—*Thomas Allsop, Esq., 34, Cornhill, London, Sept. 16, 1840.*

"Wishing your undertaking every success."—*J. R. Beasley, Esq., Milford Haven, Nov. 13, 1840.*

"Hoping your exertions will meet with the reward they merit."—*Mr. James Heaton, Library, Ludlow, Oct. 20, 1840.*

"I have no doubt but your work may be a very interesting and useful one; and I trust it will be read and well-digested by those who have the power to aid effectually any efforts that may be made in Parliament to remodel the bill, if not to destroy its machinery altogether."—*Mr. W. Underwood, 1, Vere-street, Oxford-street, London, Sept. 24, 1840.*

"Wishing your work every success."—*S. Gordon, Esq., Aungier-street, Dublin, Sept. 21, 1840.*

"Wishing you success in your work."—*C. Etherington, Esq., Heckmondwike, Leeds, Oct. 10, 1840.*



"Best wishes for your success in the undertaking."—*Robert Ceely, Esq., Surgeon, Aylesbury, Bucks.*, Sept. 10, 1840.

"I wish you every success in your undertaking."—*W. Leigh Brook, Esq., Thornton Lodge, Huddersfield*, August 15, 1840.

"Wishing you every possible success in the work you meditate."—*J. W. Pepper-corne, Esq., Author of the "Rights of Necessity, and the Treatment of the Necessitous by various Nations,"* Sept. 21, 1840.

"You have my sincerest good wishes for the success of your laudable undertaking."—*Rev. R. Cruttwell, Spexhall, Suffolk, Author of "Reform without Revolution," &c.*, Oct. 7, 1840.

"I fully approve of the object of your publication, and beg to tender my best wishes for your success with it."—*William Cooke, Esq., Huddersfield*, Oct. 7, 1840.

"Most heartily do I wish you success with your work."—*John Drakard, Esq., Ripley, Leeds*, Sept. 24, 1840.

"I wish you great success in your praiseworthy undertaking."—*Wimper, Esq., Ipswich*, Oct. 5, 1840.

"I shall be very glad if your efforts tend to ameliorate its (the New Poor-Law's) evils, if it be not swept from the Statute Book, and wish you ample remuneration for devoting yourself to such a subject."—*James White, Esq., Plymouth*, Oct. 6, 1840.

"Wishing you every success in your laudable efforts to obtain an amelioration of the condition of the working classes, either by exposing the severities, evils, and extensive operations of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, or by any other means."—*J. W. Greeves, Esq., Spalding, near Norwich*, Oct. 17, 1840.

"I very much admire your zeal, and also the well-intentioned desire you have to effect the amelioration of the condition of your poorer brethren."—*Rev. F. Glover, Dover*, Dec. 10, 1840.

"I wish you great success in your praiseworthy undertaking."—*Thomas Lindop, Esq., Hanley, Staffordshire*, Feb. 10, 1841.

"A well-known friend of the people—Baxter."—*Bronterre O'Brien in the "Operative,"* Jan. 20, 1839.

"Mr. G. R. Wythen Baxter.—This gentleman is well known as the Editor of *Don Juan, Junior*, and the associate with Mr. Oastler in his determined opposition to the infamous *Whig New Poor-Law*."—*Sheffield Patriot*, April 14, 1840.

"Dr. Humphreys wishes every success to Mr. Baxter in his undertaking."—*Rectory, Tenby*, April 1, 1841.

"I hope in the wealthy circles who have properly viewed this vile measure, the Poor-Law, your book will be duly patronized."—*Mr. T. Horn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, June 14, 1841.

"Your well-intentioned work on the New Poor-Law."—*William Kensett, Esq., Marylebone, London*, Feb. 27, 1841.

"Had you written as much in favour of the law as you have in opposition, how different would be the result!! Fear not; Lord John Russell has found out his mistake. The tide has taken a turn: may your star in this turn be in the ascendant?"—*Mr. John Cole Downing, Earl Soham, Suffolk*, June 25, 1841.

"Your excellent work on the New Poor-Law."—*Mr. James Sweet, Nottingham*, May 24, 1841.

"Wishing you every success."—*Joseph H. Cutler, Esq., Birmingham*, Jan. 26, 1841.

"I shall have much pleasure in subscribing to the work of which you have sent me the prospectus, and only hope that it will speedily make its appearance."—*The Hon. H. Fitzroy, M.P.*, Feb. 17, 1841.

"Wishing you every success in the excellent undertaking."—*Thomas Rodgers, Esq., Devonshire-square, London*, May 18, 1841.

"I shall be happy to have one copy of your work, and would deem it an honour to have my name registered among the opponents of that most cruel measure, the New Poor-Law."—*Rev. John James, Fardre, Neath, Glamorganshire*, Sept. 17, 1840.

"I conceive that such a compilation as you propose would be serviceable and salutary. It would assist those who are already convinced of the pernicious nature and tendency of the Law in their efforts to procure its abrogation, or modification, and might, perhaps, disturb the self-complacency of those sagacious persons who declare



that the measure is a healing one, and works well, by presenting strong facts relative to its operation which they could neither deny nor palliate.”—*W. J. Utten Browne, Esq., the Lodge, Norwich, Dec. 14, 1840.*

“Let the reader buy a book now preparing for publication by subscription—‘*The History of the Working of the New Poor-Law,*’ by Wythen Baxter, of Hereford. *Baxter!* Surely I have heard that name before. I am, indeed, curious to see how this New Poor-Law harmonises with the ‘SAINTS’ REST.’ Methinks these are days for the party exclusively claiming to be Protestant and evangelical to take heed to themselves to stir up the gifts which they would have us believe in them, far before hounds, &c.”—“*Gilbertize the New Poor-Law,*” by the Rev. E. Duncombe, of Newton Kyme, Tadcaster, published July, 1841.

“Success I heartily wish may amply repay your great labour.”—*W. M. Townsend, Esq., Newport, Monmouthshire, July 12, 1841.*

“How I wish I could send you £100 for a hundred copies of your work to give away! Nothing would afford me greater pleasure. I will speak of it, and recommend my friends and acquaintance to get it wherever I go. Whether your much-to-be-desired object of repealing this odious law be accomplished or not, (and God grant it may be!) I hesitate not to say, that your labour of love will deserve, as a *slight reward*, the deepest gratitude from the whole nation, and I am sure will have it from all the friends and lovers of God’s poor. Oh! where is sympathy!—where is benevolence!—where is mercy and charity flown, that you have not thousands of subscribers pouring in? The world is grown full of self-love, hardness of heart, and covetousness, and I am daily sick at heart from what I see and hear. God must, ere long, judge the land for its unrighteousness. I feel the utmost indignation at the reading and contemplation of the horrible truth, that your honesty, boldness, and love for the poor and oppressed, have been productive of the “creation of thousands of enemies,” &c., &c. *Horribile dictu!* I do hope, still, that friends will be raised up who will not allow you to *suffer in pocket.*”—*The Rev. C. Fowell Watts, Kingswood, near Wotton-under-edge, Wilts, July 15, 1841.*

Of the compiled matter which forms so considerable a portion of the work, a few words may be said.

Much carefulness and research have been employed in the assorting and condensation of the same—in the appropriate selection (where so much was to be selected from) of the variety of miscellaneous information with which it abounds; and in giving the pith—the intrinsic quintessence of public and Parliamentary speeches, newspaper statements, pamphlets, &c., divested of the redundancy of superfluous verbiage and declamatory accompaniments which attend such productions, and in amalgamating the same in a manner alike pleasing for brevity of detail, and compendious sufficiency.

Indeed the *Book of the Bastiles*, without any unseemly exaggeration, may be said to contain, amassed together in one common and convenient collection, the best vade mecum—the *only one*—of New Poor-Law literature and intelligence which has hitherto been published. Its large assemblage of authorities quoted against the “Act” and its principles, and the sayings and doings of the Act’s favourers and supporters:—its well-chosen statistics corroborative of the decrease of wages, and increase of crime, licentiousness, and rates, under the New system; its descriptive accounts of the Bastiles, Bastile food, Bastile treatment and tyranny, mortality in the Bastiles, and the wretched paupers’ dread of those houses of death and bondage—&c., &c., will be esteemed, it is presumed, worthy of

extensive and popular perusal, and valuable to be resorted to by the politician and public orator for quotation and reference.

The author of the *Book of the Bastiles* cannot close this proem without returning his cordial acknowledgments for the kind presents of copies of pamphlets, newspapers, speeches, letters, &c., which have been forwarded him from noblemen and gentlemen while his work was in progression, and also for the many friendly communications of encouragement and tenders of pecuniary assistance, which have cheered him in the arduousness and enormous expense of his undertaking.

Having published this work purely from feelings of humanity and patriotism, and with an earnest desire to open and undim the too long closed eyes of the upper and middle classes (to whose sympathies it is *especially* addressed) to the cruel and expensive operation of the New Poor-Law—the author trusts, that all those who call themselves Christians,—fear God,—love their country, and care for their country's poor; and would not have the peace of the one, or the lives of the other, wantonly destroyed by the nostrums of a new-fangled philosophy, or by the rotten remains of the jawbone of Malthus filched from his tomb—all such, he trusts, will forward the welfare of this work, and increase its circulation by every means in their power, and co-operate with him (its author) to abolish a wicked, arbitrary decree, and to sweep from existence the three unclean spirits of centralization, and their subaltern assistant apostles of manslaughter and mischief, which it has engendered, and sent forth, and who now, like so many locusts, swarm o'er all the once pleasant and prosperous land—consuming its produce, demolishing its old institutions, monopolising its long-established privileges, cruelly coercing the sons of the soil, driving them to destitution, destruction, and death, and into acts of rebellion, criminality, and despair!

A few words more—the author's last—“*Baxter's last words*”—Barons of England, your halls are famous with the noble deeds of your sires of old—Gentlemen of England, ye were once generous—cruelty was not wont to be the cognizance of either. Noblemen and Gentlemen, assume what your fathers were.—Repeal the New Poor-Law—that law which they would never have suffered to be—and declare yourselves your country's saviours. Do so; and perform, by peaceful means, what, if left undone by you, will most assuredly at last be consummated by popular fire, sword, and fury. No people could long endure the barbarities of such despots as the trio of Somerset-house—they would indeed be base if they did—and least of all will those sprung from earth's best blood, the British people. From such an ignominious yoke they must

“ ————be free or die, who speak the tongue  
That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals hold  
Which Milton held:”—

July 14, 1841.

G. R. W. B.

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PART I.

Letters, Sketches, Petitions, Addresses, &c.



## A TALK ON THE NEW POOR-LAW BILL.

---

“ And folks in office at the mention fret,  
And fain would blush, if blush they could, for *shame* !”—CHILDE HAROLD.

---

SCENE.—*The outside of a new-built “ Union ”—groans, weeping, and gnashing of teeth, and the agonizing cries of innocents writhing under the lash, heard from within. The roof falls off, and discovers the Genius of Inhumanity, a “ little fiend, that scoffs incessantly,” throned on a heap of recently starved paupers, enjoying the working of the New Poor-Law—videlicet, infanticides, suicides, seductions, and universal starvation, à l’ Irelandois.*

Enter JOHN BULL and his SHADOW.

JOHN BULL (*very indignantly*). “ It is an *infamous law* ! I care not by whom made. I am of no party ; and would as soon *execrate* an enactment framed by Lord Brougham and Vaux, as I would one by Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland and Teviotdale. Measures, *not men*, has ever been my political maxim. Such it was when ‘ my hair was juvenile and curly,’ and, now the snows of many winters have left their silver on my brow, it isn’t likely that I should change my principles. Again, I repeat, I consider this New Poor-Act a *most cruel*, a *most unjust*, and *injurious* enactment.\* Would you believe it, that under this precious starvation amendment (?), the felon—the man of blood—in the stronghold of justice, where his crimes have placed him, receives a *greater daily allowance of bread* than the honest, the industrious, and now broken-down artisan or tradesman reduced to the parish does ! ” †

SHADOW.—“ Yet, some time ago, a paragraph went the *tee-to-tum* round of the *Whig press*, stating, that a *Mister* Some-one (I forget his name) declared at a recent provincial meeting, that ‘ The New Poor-Bill had been the salvation of Essex ! ’ ‡ What are we to say ?—‘ *Laudatur ab his—culpatur ab illis* ! ’ ”

JOHN BULL.—“ I know nothing of *Essex* and its recent *salvation*. I only speak from facts, *veritable facts*, which I have seen and heard ; the cries of the poor, the aged couple, grey, and tottering ; the lovers of former, bygone years—

‘ John Anderson, my joe, John, we clamb the hills together,  
And many a canty day, John, we’ve had wi’ ane anither ! ’—

shrieking, because they are to be *torn from each other*, and taken to the ‘ *Union*, ’ as directed by this heinous bill ; the widow,—the wife, perchance, of

\* To bear the old gentleman out in this opinion, *vide* the paralleled opinions, as regard the New Poor-Law, of the wisest and the best—of the sage, the poet, the patriot, and the lawyer, given in Part II. of this work, under the head of “ *The New Poor-Law Opposition*. ”

† A fact, as regarded the allowance of the staff of life, in the *Hereford* gaol and “ *Union* ” workhouse (both of which places of bondage are situated in appropriate propinquity to each other) acknowledged, by a town-councillor, at a meeting in that city, year 1837. But the predominate preference given to crime over poverty is too well and too widely authenticated to need this or any other comment. Murderers and robbers are esteemed highly respectable and meritorious folk, nowadays, in comparison with the *horrid, infamous poor* and *destitute* !

‡ So were vociferating the *Whig press*, “ *forty like one*, ” at the time this first appeared, which was in the *Metropolitan Conservative Journal* of April 16, 1837.



some departed 'honest, staid, hard-working Tyler'—weeping that her *small stipend* of three shillings a-week (which, perhaps, she has *enjoyed for years*) must be reduced—*nearly reduced to one!*—and half of that, too, in bread as *hard and black* as her oppressors' hearts! Oh! the cruelty, not to say the injustice of such things! when the *salary* of the overseers, under the various and *newfangled* titles of 'Guardians,' 'Relieving Officers' (?), 'Clerks,' 'Surgeons,' &c., &c., and &c., &c., is *raised* two-thirds!!! Ah! it verifies the words of Shelly:—

'Asses, swine, have litter spread,  
And with fitting food are fed;  
All things have a home, but one—  
Thou, oh! *Englishman*, hast none!'

SHADOW.—"Oh! a *job*,—a *political job*,—to rob the rate-payers, and starve the poor, that '*wolves and worms* be fed!'"

JOHN BULL.—"And when any of the poor wretches complain of their wrongs and wretchedness, what is the constant reply they receive? 'Go and work!' *Yes, they bid the aged cripple, the bedridden man of eighty, and the widow woman of seventy*, to 'Go and work!!' And then the Bastardy Clause—an insult to manhood—to humanity! a barbarous injustice to the unfortunate of that sex, who were and are our mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives—worthy of the Archfiend, but towering *far* above *him* in cruelty and wickedness! What! were not our streets full enough—crowded to overflowing, with the unhappy victims of man's perfidy—those fallen, soft fair ones, who 'loved not wisely but too well'—without this legislative enactment of 'power to add to their number?' Were not our courts of Justice *sufficiently* glutted with horrent instances of the young and frail mother—the wife who ought to be!—slaying her own—the *child she loved too well to see it starve?* And was there not, prior to this, a *plentiful consumption* of arsenic, laudanum, &c.? Was the plunge in the New River, and from Westminster's Bridge, too infrequent? The tyrant of old made the inventor (a *Whig* of those days) of the brazen bull be the first to essay its tortures. May then, I say, the creators of this 'Devil's elixir' be *not the last* to experience its horrors in the persons of themselves and their families!"

SHADOW.—"Indeed, that would be justice; but, if I mistake not (alluding to the 'Bastardy Clause') it was the *boast* of its framers, that this clause would act as a stopgap to vice."

JOHN BULL.—"By making vicious!"\*

SHADOW.—"So it seems. Yet, I own, I should like to hear some lover, or admirer of this 'Bill' in question, give his reasons (if he have *any*) in favour of its efficacy, and his approval of it."

JOHN BULL.—"Pshaw! No *man* of feeling, I am sure, *can* or *will* speak in favour of such inhumanity. No! I know *my* countrymen (for they are men of feeling), they would be the *last* to vindicate a measure, the direct tendency of which is to *starve, make criminals of, and drive into rebellion*,† the suffering poor, as, most certain, it *ultimately will*: for though 'Wat Tyler' has long been dead, men like him *still exist*; and the hand that then, in his time,

\* *Vide* the Statistics, corroborative of the "*Increase of Crime*," given in Part II. of this work, and the *Assize and Quarter-Session calendars* since the administration of the New Poor-Law.

† Since this was written the riots and insurrections at *Birmingham, Todmorden, Newcastle, Sheffield, Newport, Llanidloes, Bradford, &c., &c.*, each and all the legitimate offspring of the oppressive operation of the New Poor-Law, have verified my prophecies of such occurrences foretold in this and other of my Poor-Law writings. But if the Bastille barbarities be continued, the outbreaks that they have already occasioned are mere inconsiderate *émeutes* to the bloody, determined, unanimous rebellion that will one day startle the land, with terror and dismay! Once more, I say, repeal the accursed statute, offensive to God and man, ere worse come of it.

could sacrifice the abuser of his daughter's modesty, can *also now* fell the wretch who would starve and separate an old, a faithful, and a loving couple !”\*

[They give three groans for the “New Poor-Act,” and *exceunt ambo*.]

\* “To fell the wretch” (*i. e.*, the *Relieving Officer*) in this instance might, perhaps, be against “*legem terræ*,” and *rather* wrong ; but the following is a very good recipe for the purpose, and might be more generally adopted,—if it were not *so very wrong*—

“On Monday last, Mr. John Banks, the Relieving Officer of Kirkheaton, presented himself before the Guardians of the Huddersfield Union in a most deplorable plight, his clothes hanging in tatters, and his head and face greatly disfigured. It appears that the deluded populace of his district had been on the look-out for him for three days, threatening his life (*oh fie! how naughty!*) if he durst commence his duties under the New Law. However, on Monday, he presented himself at the Workhouse, for the purpose of relieving the poor (*not he*), when a large body of semi-barbarians (*ha, ha, ha!*) surrounded the building, forced the officer out, and chased him over hedge and ditch (*would I had been there to see!*) a great distance, pelting him with mud and stones, amidst the most hideous and barbarous yells. He took refuge in a house at Dalton, but the inmates unmercifully expelled him, and drenched him with a can of water (*How could they? He, he, he!*) He was then left again to the mercy of the mob, who seized his bags and books, and threw them into a pond. His coat was torn from his back, his hat trodden under foot, and his person severely bruised. In this state he proceeded as well as he could, followed (poor harmless innocent! milk-white lamb without guile!) by a brutal crew, until at length he took refuge in a house, the inmates of which were civilized (*indeed!*) *Pray what might their names be? Baines or Brougham!*), and then made his way to Huddersfield in the miserable plight we have described.”—*Leeds Whig Print* (quoted in the *Times* of April 9, 1839).

Is ducking or dirtying a Relieving Officer, who separates man and wife, criminal? “Is killing in a Union Workhouse criminal, if sanctioned by the Poor-Law Commissioners?” These are questions. Is a Relieving Officer a reputable character? “A hangman’s post (said my friend Oastler to *Brave Barnett*, the well-known Nottingham Relieving Officer, April 5, 1839) is not one of honour—it is, however, more respectable than a separating, heart-breaking Bastille keeper!” There’s for you. And again, “If you have laid hold of a woman, and torn her, because she is a pauper, from the Englishman to whom she has been lawfully married (not over a *sweeping brush*, mind)—if you have dared to do this, Sir, I have no hesitation in saying, that you do not deserve to go to bed either cold or warm ;—you do not deserve to mix amongst civilized persons ;—you are a blot on the face of Christianity, an outlaw from the family of nature!” To show the abuses under the New Law as regards the holding of a plurality of flunky-ships, the *Barnett* here spoken of, is not only the Relieving Officer of the Nottingham Union, but it appears, from an excellent pamphlet on the Administration of the New Poor-Law in that place, by W. Roworth, Esq., Mayor of Nottingham for 1840, that he (the said *enviable Barnett*) is also Master of the Workhouse, Clerk to the Board, and Superintendent Registrar ; and moreover is wishing and waiting to become an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner!!! There’s a Somerset-house Jack (or perhaps *Jack-al* would be a better phrase) of all trades for you!!! But this is not the only instance of plurality of offices held under the three sovereigns of Somerset-house. In Hereford, that *City of the Snobs*, where Whig Conservatives and Conservative Whigs are *your only men*, and all right loyal subjects of the aforesaid Rule of Three, the Commissioners’ *man-servant*, the Clerk to the Board—a serio-comic gentleman, with a little husky churchyard laugh, and who has a pair of spectacles, and a pair of long *shanks* which are also spectacles—this duke of limbs holds, in addition to his Union Clerkship aforesaid,—the situations of New Poor-Law “Tender” Agent, Coroner, Contractor for Pauper coffins (how delicately these two crafts meet!), Electioneering Go-Between—*is* partisan and ladies’ man, and everybody’s *six-and-eight-penny* lackey that will say to him—

“*Nick*, my Dolly pal, fake away!”

The Collector, too, of the Somerset-house “rint,” in the self-same blessed *City of the Snobs*, is not altogether contented with his *sinecure*, but, at the same time, under the immediate patronage of his Masters, the Commissioners, earns a little pocket-money by inditing, for the columns of the *Hereford Papers*, certain little paragraphs, which appear now and then, eulogistic of the *mild, milky, and merciful* operation of the New Poor-Law—the savings *so immense!* !—the paupers themselves *so contented!* !—every one of them as fat as Falstaff by the provisions of the “Act!!!”



## A LETTER

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD BROUGHAM AND VAUX, EX-LORD CHANCELLOR OF GREAT BRITAIN, EDITOR OF THE "PENNY MAGAZINE," AUTHOR OF THE REMARK, "THAT IF THERE WAS LITTLE DONE LAST SESSION, THERE WOULD BE LESS IN THE NEXT;" REGIUS INVENTOR OF THE NEW POOR BILL, AND THE LONDON UNIVERSITY; CONTRIBUTOR TO THE NEWSPAPERS OF HIS OWN DEATH BY A "DREADFUL AND FATAL ACCIDENT," OCTOBER 19, 1839; CHRISTENER OF A BUGGY CALLED A BROUGHAM, &c., &c.

---

"Amiable man! we see and acknowledge the protection of Providence, by which you have so often escaped the personal detestation of your fellow-subjects, and are still reserved for the public justice of your country."—JUNIUS *to the Duke of Bedford*.

"Full twenty times was Peter feared  
For once that Peter was respected."—PETER BELL.

---

MY LORD,—There are two ways of addressing the illustrious order to which your Lordship *now* belongs—*videlicet*, in terms of eulogy, and in terms of blame. In the times of "glorious John" Dryden, men, that is authors, generally chose the former, and, doubtless, they had their reasons for so doing; but, in the times of glorious King William the Fourth,\* we have altered "all that;" and to keep pace with the march of improvement, I shall take the benefit of the alteration, and approach your Lordship with a selection from the latter.

Not that I have any fault to find with your Lordship's talents; for that you are a clever man, and have often, as Byron says, "thrown a cloud over Longman and John Murray," the "Penny Magazine," which is, I believe, hebdomadally *per-used* by two-thirds of the semstresses and tailors' apprentices throughout Great and Little Britain†, shows: nor with your Lordship's popularity, for the fact of your Whig friends (on their last return to that "sweet home," Downing-street) relieving you from the tedious, and to you *not-at-all-desirable* office, the Chancellorship, exhibits in what estimation you are held, at least by them. Neither is it my intention to question your Lordship's personal attractions; for it is well known that your nose‡ beats all our Islandic face-handles in symmetry of contour, with the exception of the ones now in the occupation of Mr. Liston the comedian, and Lord Morpeth the statesman.

No; to recapitulate my premises, it is not the talents, the popularity, or the personal beauty and attractions of your Lordship that I have at present to do with; but with something of infinitely more consequence to humanity, and, I should hope, to the *illustrious* nobleman I have now the honour to address,—I mean your Lordship's heart! which (*malgré* the breach of privilege I may commit by the saying) I consider to be formed of as stern stuff as any "thumper" that beats between this and the Land's-end.

Here, of course, not altogether unmindful of your former profession as a lawyer, your Lordship will, doubtless, challenge me to "show cause" for my above "assault and battery" on your bosom's inhabitant. My Lord, I am ready to do so; and, in so doing, must adduce that you are, or rather were, the

\* William IV. was (*Dei gratiâ*) our "purple and fine raiment" wearer when this "litera Bellerophonis" originally issued from the press. I might, but I shall not, supersede his "superscription" for Prince Albert's and Viscount Melbourne's Queen.

† It was,—but the lads and the ladies of the needle turn up their noses at "Harry's" bother now.

‡ Some modern anonymous *numskull* has pourtrayed the *once* Lord Chancellor's violent, whimsical nostrils, to a wrinkle, when he, the aforesaid *num*, whistles—

"From his lips keen satire flows,  
While rancour wriggles in his restless nose."



chief creator of that infamous and unnatural statute, the New Poor-Law; an enactment in which, as a legislator, you have immeasurably out-draconed Draco, by not only, like that crimson lawgiver, showing yourself inhumanly severe, but, at the same time, unprofitably cruel! Indeed, in the latter article, you have far outdone all former Malthusian professors in the philanthropic science of thinning and pruning a too greatly increasing population.

But to specify what I mean by your Lordship's unprofitable cruelty,—simply, I allude to the principles of your boasted crowning Reform\*—your poor man's elixir, which, *sans* the slightest pain and inconvenience to the pauper, starves—yes, starves the old, the bedridden, and the unfortunate, without the remotest advantage accruing to any one, least of all to the rate-payer; always excepting, though, the thousand-and-one grand paupers, who, under the new-styled nomenclature of “Commissioners,” “Assistant-Commissioners,” “Guardians,” “Relieving Officers,” “Collectors,” “Union Clerks,” “Union Surgeons,” “Union Coffin-makers,” &c., &c., derive a “pretty considerable” livelihood, and have been enabled, respectively, to sport their britzskas, hunters, tandems, and one-horse chaises, not to mention their *opera girls* and *milliners*, as they could afford, according to their official rank and salary, since its institution!

Can your Lordship deny this statement? In a word, can your Lordship satisfactorily prove that any two rate-payers (with the exception of Poor-Law officials and seducers) in this realm, since the introduction of the New Poor-Act, have been the gainers of *one shilling*, per annum, by the change?† If your Lordship cannot (which I am well-assured to be the case), then your Lordship will not, I presume, find fault with me for accusing you of unprofitable cruelty, or, that you have outbidden your antecessors in the amicable providence of coercing and lopping off a too-increasive population; especially when I instance, that one of the theorists in the same humane line of business, Dean Swift, only proposed an advantageous method of getting rid of Irish children—*i. e.*, by turning them into roast legs of mutton, pork pies, rashers of bacon, and other articles of daily consumption. Your Lordship's plan of starvation, being, as it is, not only applicable to children, but to adults, men and women, old and young, if not quite so original in its conception as the “bookish theoretic” recipe of the inditer of the “Drapier's Letters,” has certainly proved itself, practically, very efficacious.‡

But to proceed with other kindred co-practitioners. Those amiable and well-beloved modern Neroes, the Messrs. Burke, Bishop, and Williams, it is well-accredited, made short work with some bakers' dozens of their fellow-beings; but, at the same time, they invariably (*errors excepted*) obtained £10, and, in some instances, more, for their “cold meat;”—not to mention the gratuitous assistance they afforded anatomical jurisprudence,—which is a great deal more, your Lordship must allow, than the starvation of any pauper, since the establishment of the “Union” system, has, or ever will, benefit the rate-payers.

Besides the modern examples of this Malthusian kidney just related, there are divers ancient ones, pat to the purpose, which might be enumerated. His most Christian Majesty, King Herod, for instance, was an early *Mufti*, or *doctrinaire*, of your Lordship's academy, and essayed, with some success, even in his days, a kind of Poor-Law edict against his infantine subjects:—from

\* “They would pin their fame in future times upon their introduction of this measure; and, however fruitful in errors and strong in weakness all their other policy might have been, they would yet be prepared to cast to the winds all relics of reputation, so that they might be recognised by posterity as *authors* of the Poor-Law Amendment Act.”—*Whig-Ministerial boast!* Well; we shall see whether it will be their “*neck verse at Haribee*.”

† The Whig journals have recently been roaring of the *multitude of millions* saved by the New Poor-Law; but I have never yet met with a housekeeper (*not being a partisan or official*) who could acknowledge that he had *won* by it—though I know *several*,—ay, *many*,—who have had their *rates doubled* since its introduction.

‡ Vide “*Mortality in the Bastiles*,” given in Part II. of this work.

which affair, doubtless, the originators of the present pauper bill took their model. But, then, the Jewish suzerain had his motive for so acting; but your Lordship, and your co-partners in the aforesaid meritorious enactment, appear to have none—except you wished to show what a Whig Ministry dared do in the height of its power!

In your Lordship's sweet pet measure, there are other features quite as revolting, and decidedly more unnatural, than the starvation principle already commented upon. My references are to the Bastardy and Separation items; both of which, in my poor estimation, are indefensible; and, if not deserving, like the starvation clause, the epithet of being unprofitably cruel, are at least inhumanly so!

To begin with the separation tyranny. What, let me ask your Lordship, can be more heartless, more *un-Biblelike*, than for some coarse-minded, brutal official, some dirty, indelicate, petty despot—armed with the impious authority the New Poor-Law has given him, to come, *vi et armis*, and drag from each other, to that accursed "Union" bastille, an old and attached couple, who, for years, had eaten, drunk, slept, and walked out together in corresponsive harmony? Is not the doing so, let me inquire of your Lordship, in direct opposition to the expressed commands of the Almighty, as revealed in his Holy Scriptures—"Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder?" But there, I suppose, the pantology school to which your Lordship belongs, is superior to such low prejudices:—be it so; I do not envy the members of that seminary!

Next comes the Bastardy injustice. In looking over this division of the "bill," my first impulse is to inquire—"Had your Lordship ever a mother? and at the time of its (the New Poor-Law's) publication, a wife—a sister—a daughter?" You had! Well, that is curious! for I should have sworn, by this notoriously injurious and unmanly clause, that you had not. But, peradventure, although now so "heroic, stoic, and sententious," your Lordship, in your juvenile days, when one of "us youth" found gallantry—that is the *paternity part* of it (for you *had not five thousand a-year then!*) rather too expensive, and out (I only hazard the supposition) of a philanthropic desire to relieve your successors in the amorous science from such a liability, gratuitously inserted the clause we are talking about. Be that, however, as it may, it is rather hard on the women, your Lordship must admit, that a licence, free of all costs, should be granted by Government to any "Captain Bold of Halifax," or fashionable phantom, who shall feel disposed to make the necessary arrangements to ruin them: and also, that a legislature should hold out inducements to the said poor lasses, subsequently to desert, drown, or twist the necks of their little ones.

But banter apart. Hitherto, I have used that figure, as I thought it the least offensive way in which I could convey to your Lordship my sentiments (I believe the sentiments of indignant thousands) on the New Poor-Law, calculated as that enactment is, to starve, criminate, and ultimately drive into revolution,\* the distressed labourer and artisan. Cervantes is said to have shamed, by his inimitable Don Quixote, chivalry from Spain; would that this, my epistola, might have the same effect in shaming your Lordship from advocating and supporting such a legislative cruelty! Believe me, when I say, your allowing it to exercise such a benevolent influence, would, in no degree, compromise your Lordship's character, as a man—a Christian—or a diplomatist.

This hint is not slightly thrown out—or addressed to your Lordship only, but also to your former colleagues in office. Let them take it, and that in time; for should they still persist to force this heinous "bill" on the people of

\* It has done that since, and is still *doing it*: pikes are being wrought whilst I write, though the *anvil is muffled* on which they are made! "I know what I know, but I munna tell you!"



England—*Masaniello will throw aside his nets, and Wat Tyler will be in Smithfield!*\*

I am, with the greatest respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

April 30, 1837.

## A LETTER

TO THE PRESENT WHIG MINISTRY—ADVOCATES FOR FLOGGING IN THE ARMY—  
THE FACTORY SYSTEM—RURAL POLICE—AND THE NEW POOR-LAW.

“Quousque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientiâ nostrâ?”—CIC., IN CAT.

SEXTON.—“Which be the malefactors?”

DOG.—“Marry, that am I and my partners.”—MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—Providence in its mercy hath benevolently ordained, that those epidemics, or pests, which sometimes pay their awful visitation to mankind, though violent in their effects while they last, are not in their duration of any long continuance.

Now, my Lords and Gentlemen, in England there is at present a visitation (without the remotest symptom of abatement) infinitely more desolating, more cruel, and more destructive in its ravages than any plagues:—more desolating, because it attacks those who are already desolate;—more cruel, because its unhappy victims are first by it deprived of home, friends, and every means of alleviation, and then left to sure destruction, and the refusal of an “elm coffin three-quarters-of-an-inch thick;”† more destructive, because its attacks are confined, with the greatest liberality, to one class of society—those who have none to help them—among whom it spares neither sex or age; the infant smiler at its mother's breast, and the moaning, bedridden old man of eighty, are equally amenable to its unnatural and brutal authority—equally subjected to be torn, at a moment's notice, from those that love them, and hurried off to be pent up in a loathsome prison-house, far from the genial influence of human

\* This, I suppose, the “noble and learned Lord” will designate, now he has got his £5,000 *per annum*, inflammatory language in regard to the New Poor-Law. I can only (as Earl Stanhope said, in the House of Lords, to the “great Westmoreland pauper,” June, 1838), retort, “The noble and learned Lord opposite had used language more inflammatory, if not treasonable, on some occasions.” If accused of violence by his Lordship, or his flunkies, the *Morning Chronicle*, *Examiner*, &c., such will be my “respondere paratus,” as it will be such capital *charivari* to get him and his steam up to recapitulate the bouncer:—“My Lords, I did not think I should have lived to be charged (*poor holy innocent!*) with using treasonable language (*laughter*). It is quite untrue that I ever made an inflammatory harangue to the people of Birmingham, as it has been stated. I never stopped in that great town longer than to change horses; nor did I ever say—as it has been imputed to me—that I hoped to live to see the day when the heads of kings should be made foot-balls for little boys to kick along the streets (*loud laughter*). I leave it to your Lordships to say whether that is my usual way of expressing myself on any subject.”—Ha! ha! ha! Well done, slashing Harry! there's nothing like throwing the hatchet a good distance!

† Coffins made plain and of good elm board, three-quarters-of-an-inch thick, with cambric dresses for paupers, who, at the time of their respective deaths, should not exceed four years of age. Ditto for paupers above four years, and not exceeding thirteen. Ditto for all above thirteen.—*Vide* the “*Union*” *Tenders, en passant*. Since these *tenders* were issued, there has been a manifest improvement made by the Commissioners in the dead line of business. Paupers' bodies now, instead of being buried are packed up, and sent, by a dozen-and-a-half, or so, to the hospitals and Schools of Anatomy, where, after being carved into cutlets, they are allowed to rot and decompose promiscuously in a mass—except, indeed, when a dealer in “any bones” (*human ones*) is attached to the Schools of Anatomy, which is frequently the case.



sympathy, and never to see the green earth, their homes, their village churches, more !\*

The pest I allude to, as you must be well aware, is your own instituted and fostered *Procès monstre* against poverty—your New Poor-Law !

I am no orator, my Lords and Gentlemen, as some of you profess to be, which I regret ; inasmuch as, in the present instance, I should have had plenty of opportunity, in the shrieks and moans of a famishing poor, of exercising my eloquence—no statesman, as all of you are ; which makes me rejoice—particularly if such statutes as the New Poor-Law are the pride of statesmanship ! But I would simply ask you, my Lords and Gentlemen, for how long is it your will and pleasure that this poor man's curse, this patent life-destroyer, rife with all its present horrors, its present inhumanities, and its present injustices, shall depopulate and demoralize our once happy realm ?

That crimes will proceed from such tyrannical enactments, is, alas ! a certainty established by past events beyond the redemption of a doubt. To prove my ultimatum, cashier, my Lords and Gentlemen, the partial statements of your paid £1,000 and £2,000 per annum Commissioners ;† and, absenting yourselves awhile from dearest Downing-street, and the prurient enjoyment of counting over the heaps of glittering twenty-shilling-pieces of your last quarter's salaries, search the newspapers, inspect the coroners' inquests, turn to the juries' verdicts, published since the paupers' amendment Act has been the law of the land, and you will acknowledge, if in the least degree open to conviction, that not only its universally anticipated offspring, murders, suicides, infanticides, feticides, seductions, starvations, &c., have been fearfully engendered through its means, but, also, that street, highway, house, and other robberies, have numerically, in every part of the country, increased !‡

And can the results be wondered at, when such notorious incentives to viciousness and despair, as the Bastardy, Separation, Anti-public worship, and No-out-door-relief clauses, are the leading articles (and precious ones they are too !) of the code in question ; and when its "Union," or more properly its *dis-union* treatment, far exceeds in severity—needless, shameful severity !—that experienced by murderers, felons, and other criminals, in the abodes of restraint where their ill deeds have placed them ? For in the latter, the inmates are uniformly allowed a sufficient quantity of food, unmeasured by the inch, or unweighed by the ounce ; and are not, in the extremest cases,§ debarred from the visits of their friends and relatives—or the acceptance of the presents and offerings of those friends and relatives||—benefits which the unfortunate prisoners (for they are nothing else) have not hitherto experienced in the Bastiles—at least, if the public papers are to be believed.

\* I have seen many go—reluctantly, weeping, go—into these dread abodes, whose grim porters "shut the gates of mercy on mankind"—but I have never seen them come out again ! To be sure I have, some few days or weeks, as it may be, afterwards, observed, in rapid succession, issue therefrom, borne on men's shoulders, a few slight boards nailed together in the shape of boxes, in which, perhaps, might be inclosed their bodies—or *those portions of them not serviceable to the anatomical collection of the "Union" surgeon, and his apprentice boys !* "In the midst of life," you are always "in death" when you pass the Hereford Union House ! But it cannot be wondered at when that Bastile is surrounded by swamps, and has the pestilential gas works in its rear.

† *Vide* Mr. John Day's (of Southwark) able and ample exposure of the fables and fallacies of these very veracious gentlemen, quoted in Part II. of this work—"The Boasted Economy of the New Poor-Law."

‡ Can the Downing-street officials refute this statement ? If so, let them show cause ; if not, as the poet says, "*Melius non tangere.*" *Vide* the statistics on the "*Increase of Crime*" given in Part II. of this work.

§ The "morning calls" on the Murderer Greenacre, and his evening sederunts, verify that ; as do also that "best of cut-throats," Courvoisier's fashionable *conversaziones*, and sittings for his *portrait* !

|| *Vide* several instances related in Part II. of this work, under the head of "*Bastile Treatment and Tyranny.*"

But to proceed:—Curiously felicitous in barbarity, and cunningly devised as the New Pauper-Extermination Act has proved itself, is it possible—sanguine and renowned for temerity, as a Whig Ministry is generally allowed to be—is it possible, my Lords and Gentlemen, that you could conceive the probability of ever forcing it down the throats of an indignant, and justly irritated people?—a people, chronicled through all ages for their hatred of oppression—a people, whose ancestors responded trillion-tongued to Wat Tyler's cry for redress—and hoarsely re-echoed the sounded “Tambourgi” of liberty in the reign of James the Second! Is it possible, English-born as you are, and knowing the “stern stuff” Englishmen are made of—their daring resolution and undaunted heroism—

“Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,  
The lords of human kind!”

is it possible, I repeat, my Lords and Gentlemen, that you ever had such a thought in contemplation? If you had, wofully, terribly, and perhaps revengefully, will you be deceived!\*

But, supposing it to be practically possible to carry the starvation principle of your “bill” into execution; if the poor of these realms—the halt, the lame, the blind, the aged, the bedridden, and the broken-hearted—have so grievously offended you and yours, and thereby rendered themselves amenable to the punishment of death—in mercy to the pauper wretches, discard the inch-by-inch system, and do your work of revenge and extermination boldly; shake not the chain and let the victims live—live in excruciating torment—when the summary and wholesale means of destruction by drowning, by shooting, by beheading, and by hanging, are within your reach. The latter, though cruel, would be manly. The former is only the revenge of a coward!

But, perhaps, I have done you injustice, and, as a body, you are not inclined to proceed to such extremities; if so, permit me to suggest what I opine would be an amelioration of the measure we have been talking about. It is simply, my Lords and Gentlemen, to add, by “way of rider,” a clause to the following effect, *videlicet*:—that, for the future, convicts be imprisoned in the “Unions,” with the “Commissioners,” &c., for their gaolers and turnkeys; and, that in return, the poor be sent to Newgate, the “hulks,” Botany Bay, and other places hitherto used for penal restraint and confine, according to their several degrees of poverty and wretchedness. Such an exchange of destination, if not of the criminal, would, believe me, *very much rejoice* the heart of the pauper; and would, in fact, my Lords and Gentlemen, be mercy, and somewhat more like distributive justice, than the present system of punishing wretchedness *more* than crime.

And now, leaving my amendment for consideration at your next cabinet

\* “The oppressions of Empson and Dudley had been founded on a stretch of power, usurped and justified on the principles of the civil law; by which these *Misceants* had been enabled to violate a fundamental part of our Constitution, the way of trial by juries. The effect on the people was dreadful. Accordingly, in the next reign, though the authority by which they had acted, had ever been in Parliament, these creatures of Tyranny, were indicted for High Treason, were condemned, and executed, for having been instrumental in subverting *legem terræ*; and the extorted Statute under which they had hoped to have sheltered themselves, was, with a just indignation, repealed.”—*Bishop Hurd. Verb. sap.*, My Lords Melbourne, John Russell, Brougham, and you, Messrs. the Commissioners, Frankland Lewis, Jun., Edwin Chadwick, and Co., and also to your Grace of Portland, who, as head-man of the *Workshop Board of Guardians*, sometime ago (in 1839) struck off *poor old John Berry's* pittance of 2s. a-week, he being 90 years of age at the time; and to your Earlship of Stradbroke, of whom the *Champion* (Dec. 1, 1839) said, “Observe the figure which Earl Stradbroke makes as a Guardian (?) of the Poor; and mark his skill in cutting down 3d. a-week from the allowance of a man of 75, and a woman of 83;” and likewise to your Earlship of Radnor who drove the widow from your cornfield to make room for “nine farrow” and a sow!



dinner, allow me, with Horatius Flaccus, to address each individually concerning it—

“——— Si quod novisti rectius istis :—  
Candidus imperti—si non, his utere mecum.”

I am, my Lords and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

May 20, 1837.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

## A LETTER

TO THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT MELBOURNE.

“ He was the wildest far of all ;  
He had a dozen wedded wives.”—WORDSWORTH’S “ PETER BELL.”

“ The dissolutes spirit that fell,  
The sensuallest, and, after Asmodai,  
The fleshliest incubus.”——PARADISE REGAINED.

“ Am I politic?—Am I subtle?—Am I a Machiavel?”—MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

MY LORD,—Bramah, the Indian *D.D.*, taught his votaries to read, write, and play at chess : your Lordship has been far more bountiful in your instructions to your followers, and instilled into their minds lessons of much greater moral importance, namely, that a *withered Tory*, notwithstanding his physical and constitutional disqualifications, makes an excellent *Whig Minister* ; and that *ratting* is commendable when a soft abandonment on a Treasury cushion, stuffed with Lamb’s wool, and a *carte blanche* to provision all relations, inclusive of No. One, are the sweetmeats held out to the *rat*.

That this has been your system of education, your Lordship cannot, I think, deny ; for that you were, at one time, a *Tory* is a *fact*, and therefore beyond your Lordship’s impeachment—and that you are now the Premier of Great Britain and Ireland, (*under Dan*,) is also a *fact*, and equally beyond contradiction ; though how your Lordship managed to become such, has puzzled and nonplused wiser men than the inditer of this epistola !\*

To be sure there are several ways of gaining notoriety, as there are several ways of gaining pence. Juvenal (who, if he had been living now, would not have been over-choice in the employment of his *mots d’usage*—particularly, I am afraid, if addressing your Lordship) says, in his Dunciad :—

“ Aude aliquid brevibus Gyaris et carcere dignum,  
Si vis esse aliquis”——

and taking his advice, many have, certainly, with a curious felicity, practically realised his theory. *Greenacre*, for instance, (of whom of course, being a *great Reformer*, your Lordship must have heard), made mince-cutlets of his gentle intended, and thus, by the proffered assistance of a *congenial* press, won his modicum of what so many sumphs are at this hour toiling for—John Bull’s sympathy, sovereigns, and regard. “ Boz,” again, (doubtless better known to your Lordship as *Mister Dickens*, a three-half-penny reporter on the establish-

\* What says the venerable Nestor of the New Poor-Law Opposition, Mr. Samuel Roberts of Sheffield, of the diplomatic merits of Earl Melbourne and his Company ? Hear him :—“ This kingdom has once before been governed by a Virgin Queen, and the nation prospered ; but she had *men* ; nay, she had *wise men* for her ministers. She had a *Burleigh*, and he was himself a host. We have again a Virgin Queen ; alas ! for her and us, she has no Burleigh. She has a host of Ministers, but all of them united would not make a Burleigh. Burleigh’s *dog* would have lifted up his leg against the best of them !”



ment of your Lordship's most devoted and most obedient *Morning Chronicle*), by scouring up, "*bettersh than new*," the experience and reports of his former mornings at Bow-street, and evening glories in St. Giles's, and adding thereunto a double allowance of Cockney filth and slang, has also contrived to obtain a sort of "Jim Crow," "Rory O'More," and "Bell's Life in London" reputation. Even Earl Spencer, the last man in the world to do anything very Cæsarlike or celebrated, has vindicated, *after a sort*, his claim to notoriety, by periodically exhibiting in Northamptonshire, at cattle-shows, a prize ox, a yearling bull, the best boar pig and breeding sow, and a two-years' old ram of great merit. But what renouncing action your Lordship perpetrated, previous to your being gazetted as the "noble lord at the head of his Majesty's Government," worthy of that *once* high, and *now* well-paid office, I am free to confess, as one of your Lordship's red-tape *attachés* would say, I cannot remember—unless, indeed, it was your Lordship's good fortune in being born the son of the late Lord and Lady Melbourne, both of whom were, I believe, *exceedingly respected* by his pious Majesty George the Fourth. It was, I suppose, owing to that circumstance, that for the last several years the world has, like a nag mare regarding her foal at foot, had

—"All its eyes on Lord and Lady Melbourne's son;  
Thy parents' merits set thee up to view,  
And showed thee in the fairest point of light,  
To make thy virtues or thy faults conspicuous!"\*

But to proceed. If your Lordship did not distinguish yourself in any remarkable degree, before your promotion to protocols and Downing-street—you have most assuredly done so since, and that in a supereminent way, both in the articles of love and policy. Of your Lordship's talents in the former accomplishment, I shall say *nought on†* the subject, save that, with all your charms, you have *apparently* been a — *fortunate* man! especially when a gentleman of undeviating integrity, like his Roman ancestor, Cato, has given the equitable loan of his wife to your Lordship. Of the latter ditto, however, I shall not be so brief in my comments—especially as I think the *first-rate talents* (I am not joking) your Lordship has exhibited in that department, deserve more attention. And here, as I know your Lordship to be a man of an excessively modest and retiring disposition, I will take the liberty of pointing out to the public what I conceive to be one of the most brilliant diplomatic hits ever imagined by the head (for the *heart* could possibly have had nothing to do with it!) of a statesman, viz.,—your Lordship and your Lordship's colleagues' forethought of the new-starving-no-murder-poor-bill—which piece of exquisite legislation—although now and then indifferently-well lauded by the *Morning Chronicle*, and sometimes by your Lordship's self—has not, I conceive, been sufficiently appreciated, at least in the light in which I at present wish to exhibit it—as a measure of policy. And taking it in that light, what, let me ask your Lordship's calumniators, what could be a finer, a more consummate stroke of politic art than this measure in debate? To exempify: *Act the 1st*,—Lord Melbourne and his Whig companions ("all honourable men") come into place and pension on the shoulders of the people. *Act the 2d*,—They are supported and protected by those people. *Act the 3d*,—Lord Melbourne and his Whig companions (*still* all honourable men!) deceive those people! *Act the 4th*,—Those people murmur. *Act the 5th*,—Lord Melbourne and his Whig companions (*yet* all honourable men!) are alarmed; and to get rid of their *former friends*, *now* their enemies—(mark the deep sagacity of the attempt), organize a statute to *starve those people*, and to *bestow the sustenance, which the rate-payers have provided for them in times of need, on their new grasping*

\* Cato a "little scratched" for the occasion.

† Query, Norton? For—

"Oh! yes, I will own we were dear to each other!"

and grinding Flunky allies—the nick-named “Commissioners,” “Relieving Officers,”(?) “Clerks,” “Surgeons,” “Guardians.” &c., &c., &c., &c., &c., and &c., &c., &c., &c., &c. Excellent Lord Melbourne!! Sagacious Lord Melbourne!!! Why your Lordship is a match for the Florentine, and might, as the meek, merciful Richard says,—

Change shapes with Proteus, for *advantages*,  
And set the murd’rous Machiavel to school”

to learn maxims of political jurisprudence! But not to surfeit your Lordship with praise—much and deservedly as your method of paying old debts must be appreciated, there is, however, one drawback to its practical and perfect well working—that is, on the large scale your Lordship contemplated—namely, that the time is *unfortunately* gone by, when you could starve (*malgré* your official announcement that it “raised their moral dignity”) some thousands of your fellow-countrymen, and receive nothing in return but benedictions and confessions of unworthiness—

———“Thanks, noble Peer!

The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear!”

from them, while undergoing the pinching operation which they had brought upon themselves by—their poverty! Here, I shall leave your Lordship for the present, not because I have no further terms of eulogy to bestow upon your Lordship, but fearful lest the printer’s devil of that far-famed journal *de l’Empire*, the *Morning Chronicle*, should squeak forth in the syllables of a certain burlesque—\*

———“Out of my sight! Begone!

By all my stars, thou enviest ‘*Lord Melbourne!*’”†

which, I most *conscientiously* assure your Lordship, is not the case—far from it!

I am, with respect,

Your Lordship’s obedient servant,

May 14, 1837.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

## A LETTER

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE POOR-LAW COMMITTEE.‡

“—The issues of life and death are in your hands. You are to restore ‘these men’ once more to the enjoyment of existence and freedom—or to send ‘them’ to an ignominious death. \* \* \* \* Awful is the consideration—still more awful the responsibility. Violate not lightly ‘those temples’ which the Lord hath made. Recollect, the word once gone from you it is irrevocable. Speak it not lightly. \* \* \* \* \* If you do this deed, do it not lightly, or its consequences will follow you like a shadow—will accompany you in your crowded walks—be with you in your homes, and ‘their’ accusing ‘spirits’ will hover over your death-beds, and confront and condemn you at the judgment-seat of your God. Beware what you do!”—CHARLES PHILLIPS’S DEFENCE OF COURVOISIER, Friday, June 26, 1840.

GENTLEMEN,—You have, for a very long while, like so many brood hens or

\* “Tom Thumb.”

† The respective fates of Piers Gaveston, De Spencer, “and Busby, Bagot here, and Green,” Empson and Dudley, and the “gentle Mortimer” (Lord Melbourne’s double to a *doxy* and “a hey diddle diddle!”) prevent me from the entertainment of any such a *desireable feeling* as envy as regards him, *malgré* his apparently prosperous and proud court and cabinet “innings.” No; odds, cords, and axes! the “off with his head—so much for Buckingham” species of rewards and punishments, which so generally has been enjoyed by English *favourites*, has no charms for me! To escape such a catastrophe, and to perpetuate the New Poor-Law of Terror, its Ministers and Commissioners, the Rural Police, it seems, is to be called into requisition: but will that unconstitutional corps so conserve pitiless peers and their pauper pest? No, no; “if,” as my glorious friend Oastler has it, “a rural police is to be established to enforce the New Poor-Law, the next page of England’s history will be one of blood!”

‡ This was published in the *Conservative Journal*, May 27, 1837. Mr. Walter moved for



tailors at stitch, sat without eliciting anything new on the subject of Poor-Laws, or made any material progress, beneficial or otherwise, with the exception of heroically fatiguing Mr. D. W. Harvey,\* whose recent application for liberty to bid you all "good night," and the profitable announcement, between whiles, in the debates, that "Mr. Fazakerley brought up the report of the Poor-Law Committee," are the first-fruits of your proceedings, publicly chronicled, since your inauguration as the poor man's special jury.

This dilatoriness, and waste of the public time and patience on your parts, look, I must confess, very suspicious, and argue anything but a desire to remedy the paupers' wrongs you are assembled to consider—and, at the same time, is exceedingly hard on the poor wretches who are principally concerned in your determinations, and who the while, *sans* the least lenity or mitigation of the exterminatory decree, are experiencing, in the persons of themselves, wives, and little ones, all its more than horrors, all its more than cruelties, and all its more than indecencies.

In justice to these ignominiously-treated children of poverty, when you commenced your deliberation on what to them has proved but "one concern," if not a total suppression, at least a cessation of New Poor-Law hostilities, through your instance and instigation, ought to have been declared on the parts of their savage enemies—the vulture-hearted Commissioners, Surgeons, Relieving Officers, &c., &c. This should have been done at all events, even in the issue of your deliberations terminating in favour of the poor and the poor's cause; as, subsequently, should it do so, and a majority of you register your condemnation—your abhorrence of the Whigs' burking edict—during the period of your sitting, its victims have been inhumanly, unlawfully, and unnecessarily tortured and coerced!

And even should you be so packed—so encushioned by Whig intimidation and Whig influence—so utterly lost to humanity and to human feelings, as, *ex officio*, to authorise by your approval, or faint blame,† such atrocities as run riot in almost every clause of the measure, now the subject of your discussion—then, even then, the unfortunate victims of the former brawlers forth of "the People, the legitimate source of all power!" ought, in conjunction with the murderer and felon (who are not hanged or transported before the verdict of the jury has been ascertained), to have been exonerated from the fiendlike persecutions and grinding tyranny of their merciless taskmasters.

But I hope when the results of your protracted consultation are known, numerically you will prove, that your possess better hearts; and that the questionable company, during your committeeeship, which you were obligated to keep, did not so far vitiate your sympathies for the sex of those who were, or are, your mothers, sisters, and daughters—or harden you against the sufferings of those, who, although by chance born your inferiors in rank and fortune, are, nevertheless, equally consequential, with yourselves, in the sight of *Him*, who is the Father of all. In a word, I trust you will come to no conclusion which will realize the Hudibrasian opprobrium—

"Rooks, Committeemen and Trustees!"

a Committee Feb. 6, 1837, which, a few days after, was appointed. And a precious committee it turned out! composed as it was of all the Somerset-house spaniels, with the exception of three members, and they were not allowed the "*rule of three*," but were so insulted and annoyed that each of them was successively driven to resign. While all the numerous witnesses brought before the committee for Ministers were paid from the public purse, but the three independent members had to pay the expenses of theirs from their own pockets.

\* May the 12th, 1837, Mr. D. W. Harvey expressed his disapprobation of the dilatory proceedings and *one-sided* conduct of the Poor-Law Committee, and prayed the House to allow him to discontinue his attendance as a member of that Committee.

† Precisely what they succeedingly did. Well, O'Connell sold the factory children and his word of *honour* (?) for a thousand sovereigns, and, in this instance, also,—

Once, we confess, beneath 'each' patriot's cloak,  
From the crack'd bag, the dropping guineas spoke!



I now, Gentlemen, as there is every reason (judging from the *progress* you have made), to suppose that your inquiry will not be terminated for some time, approach a subject of momentous importance both to yourselves and to the country at large—I mean your responsibility as members of the New Poor-Law Committee.

“Had there been no star-chamber,” writes the terse author of the *Letters of Junius*, “there would have been no rebellion against Charles I.”—and on the result of your deliberations depend, whether this greater tyranny than the “star-chamber,” the starvation, separation, seduction statute shall surcease its pestlike influence; or whether England—your native England—shall be convulsed with intestine insurrections from one end to the other:—whether a few paupers, ridiculously veiling their poverty under the assumed grandiloquence of “Commissioners,” “Surgeons,” “Relieving Officers,” “Clerks,” &c., &c., are partially to be kept in state, with their britzskas, their hunters, opera girls, and one-horse chaises, to the manifest injustice of the rest; or whether a more just and impartial distribution of the householders’ subscriptions is to be commenced:—whether the poor are to be dealt out a measured number of ounces and spoonful of hard, unwholesome food,\* which would set at defiance the mechanical digestion of “Vaucanson’s duck;” or whether they are to be nourished according to the liberal and over-abundant means prepared for that purpose by the rate-payers of this kingdom:†—whether the liberty of the artisan and labourer is to be respected, or whether they are to be dragged from their homes, their wives, and their children, at the beck of every paid and brutal underling:—whether the laws of God and nature are to be obeyed, or whether husband and wife, children and parents, are to be severed by a process infinitely more cruel than death:—whether the honour and modesty of the poor man’s sisters and daughters are to receive that legal protection which your satin-vested fair ones are awarded by the laws; or whether they are to fall an authorised prey to the lust of any smooth-faced or hoary villain:—whether poverty is to be considered a crime, penally higher in atrocity than murder or felony, and punished, as it now is, far more severely;‡ or whether its professors are to receive, if not superior treatment, at least equal rights and immunities with criminals and convicts.

In short, on your exertions purely depends, whether the public heart and eye are daily to be shocked with horrent instances of thick-coming murders, suicides, infanticides, feticides, seductions, starvations, &c., or whether the lives of the poor and their families are legally to be cared for *more* than a litter of blind puppies—or *as much* as a kennel of game dogs when they are sick.

Gentlemen, these are serious consequences, and worthy your deepest deliberation—for your deliberation ought to embrace all these contingencies—and in so doing, you are bound, like jurymen, to give your verdict fearlessly and impartially. Let not, therefore, the interested statements of placemen and large-handed public robbers, predominate in your judgments over the direct evidence and every-day demonstrations of pauper starvations and pauper agonies.

Do not then be led away by the prophesied saving which will accrue to the public, by the grinding down of the poor man’s flesh and bones; for, as a rate-payer, I here announce, that instead of a retrenchment taking place, hitherto, the new system has proved far more expensive than the old!§ nor with the

\* *Vide* the division in Part II. of this work, entitled “*Bastile Food*.”

† Between £7,000,000 and £8,000,000 sterling per annum! according to M’Culloch; but a recent authority estimates the annual poor’s-rate £5,000,000, and the yearly income of Great Britain at £500,000,000.

‡ In another portion of this work will be found corroborative evidence of the prevalence, under the New Poor-Law, of Crime being treated as a very gentlemanly fellow, and Poverty as a very vicious character indeed.

§ *Vide* the statistics on the increase of parish taxes attached to Part II. of this work; and the collectors’ frequent morning calls for another “*poor’s-rate*.”

abuses and deficiencies of the former law, as their previous existence is no extenuation for the unnatural cruelties of the present:—nor with the *Whig mecleery patois*, “a thing devised by the enemy,” that its operation “raises the moral character of the labourer:”—nor, lastly, allow yourselves to be deceived and persuaded into indifference by exaggerated accounts of the fancied contentment and lulled repose of the population. Their indignation, believe me, is not dead, but only sleeps; let them once know that they have nothing to expect from your clemency, and, like a tempest when it is terrible, they will arise in anger, and destroy the dastard few who would exterminate them and theirs, body and soul!

Once, and yet once again, in the name of an injured and a cruelly-used multitude, whose advocate I am, I entreat you to reform with mercy, and to do so in time; and, above all, leave it not to the discretion of a few officials—themselves *paupers*\* notoriously interested in the result—whether several millions of their fellow-paupers, to pamper their own riot and extravagance, shall, slowly, yet surely, and under the encouragement of an infamous law, be imprisoned in the “Union” houses of bondage—or be “allowed” to rot and fester in the public streets.

Hoping I have fully impressed upon your minds, the fearful results which would spring from the arbitrary continuance of the new system of pauper jurisprudence; and also your great responsibility as members of the Poor-Law Committee now sitting—

I am, with the greatest respect,

Gentlemen, your obdient servant,

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

May 27, 1837.

## A LETTER

OF EXPOSTULATION AND WARNING ADDRESSED TO THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS.

“The evil that ‘ye’ cause to be done,  
That is ‘your’ means to live: Do ‘ye’ but think  
What ‘tis to cram a maw, or clothe a back,  
From their abominable and beastly touches.

\* \* \* \*

Can ‘ye’ believe ‘your’ living is a life,  
So stinkingly depending? Go, mend, go mend.”—MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

HAM.—“Here’s the Commission.”—HAMLET.

“———But of this be sure,  
To do ought good never will be our task,  
But ever to do ill our sole delight.”—PARADISE LOST.

GENTLEMEN,—The inhabitants of this country, once, *par excellence*, called “Merrie Englande,” but now no longer aspiring to that joyous appellation,

\* The Commissioners are great folk now to be sure, and, of course, it is *very naughty* of me to call them paupers; but, as Mr. Murphy said at the *Freemasons’ Tavern Poor-Law Meeting*, Feb. 19, 1838, “Mr. Edwin Chadwick, some years ago, had probably been in a situation to render it likely that he himself might have applied to the overseers for relief, and he (Mr. Murphy) remembered the time when he almost appeared in that situation.” And if, previously to their installation as *executioners* of the poor, their possession of cash was little, their property of chastity appears to have been still less. The following *morceau*, which appeared in the *Morning Advertiser*, of March 20, 1838, could not, with sincerity, have been chronicled of a Joseph:—

“UNION-HALL.—Yesterday, Jane Mott, who described herself the wife of Mr. Mott, the Poor-Law Commissioner, was brought before Mr. Traill, charged with being drunk and disorderly, and, while in that condition, using threatening language towards two tradesmen in Walworth. From the evidence of the complainants,



were given to hope that, after the summary disposal of Messrs. Burke, Bishop, Hare, and Williams, and other eminent professors of the Benthamite, Broughamite, Malthusian, and Martineauan philosophy, the doctrine of popular extermination would fall into disuse, and not for the future be practically illustrated, except with *en-grave-ings* on steel, and that amid the hustle of the field of battle, and in the "big wars." But subsequent events have shown how great was their delusion, when in you, and in your congenial "flunky" underlings, the never-to-be-too-much-despised Guardians," "Relieving Officers," "Clerks," "Union Surgeons," &c., &c., they perceive an organized body, without shame and without pity, avariciously determined, at all hazards, to revive the statutes of God and man, hitherto respected, being by you and them unanimously contemned—certainly the principles (if not exactly employing the same executive means of realizing them), of the before-mentioned worthies; and that on a much larger scale of business, and with all the aids, advantages, and appliances to boot, which they had not; *videlicet*, the ardent encouragement of the laws, the open assistance and protection of the government, the unconstitutional co-operation of the soldiery\* and police force, not to mention the prurient, and doubtless well-paid laudation of the greater portion of the press,† and the shameful inertia, with a few, too few exceptions, of the rest. And to crown the whole, and chronicle the most barefaced job ever perpetrated, the payment of from twelve hundred to two thousand pounds per annum, (obtained, bear in mind, under false pretences, from the breeches'-pockets of the rate-payers,) to each of you, by way of "prize money," to stimulate your exertions to carry into effect the speedy completion of the Whigs' fiendish speculation of demoralizing, maddening, starving, and ultimately slaughtering, by excruciating gradations, the helpless and suffering poor.

Believe me, when I aver, it is with much reluctance, and more abhorrence, that I can bring myself to address a clique of men, so widely renowned for inhumanity as yourselves, and who, in the violent and unnatural cruelty of your "orders," have not even shown yourselves deserving of Timon's redeeming qualification, of being "courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears." And I certainly should not so expend my ink did I not wish (for the sake of the poor wretches, after whom, by the powers that be, like so many ravening blood-hounds, you have been set), to experimentize how far you are accessible to the animal sensations of pity and fear; and, if at all! whether it would be possible, by the application of a prescribed quantum of either, to incite you to the committal of at least one *meritorious* action in your lives—to throw up your disgraceful commissions!

*Malgré*, then, that I am afraid it will prove an indifferent undertaking, I will begin my experiment by commencing an appeal to your feelings, if you possess any, which (judging from some of your "written instructions," which I lately, with signal disgust, perused), I very much doubt; and, in so doing, I will subscribe, for your information, my reasons, and the reasons I should conceive, of every man, whose heart is one degree softer than the stones which

it appeared that on Saturday evening, Mrs. Mott, who lives in the same street with them, returned home drunk, and commenced making a noise in the street. She soon collected a crowd in front of a Mr. Nelson's house, and, addressing the mob, said, that she was the wife of Mr. Mott, the Poor-Law Commissioner, and then, pointing at Mr. Nelson's house, kept exclaiming, 'that man keeps Mott's — in his house, while I, his lawful, married wife, am turned out to do the best I can for myself,' " &c., &c., &c.

\* It has been with the greatest reluctance—with "curses not loud, but deep"—that the soldiers have been prevailed upon to do the dirty work of Somerset-house. They *don't like fighting against their fathers, brothers, sons, and mothers.*"

† No sooner does a newspaper show fight and fierceness against the New Poor-Law, than, a week or two afterwards, you will be sure to perceive the postman take a *Government letter* (a double one, containing something "*slick*") to the office of the said paper, and, ten to one, but ever after the reception of the significance in question, the Editor is remarkably chary in his usage of the term *Bastile*, and of the insertion of "Another affecting Death by Des- titution!"



compose the water-front of Somerset-house, why I could not accept, much less enjoy, an appointment similar to the ones each of you hold, as long as any situation short of the common Ketch, or hangman, was in probable reversion :—simply, because my heart would sicken with loathing, and refuse with indignation, a livelihood, when I knew it was wrung from the deaths, suicides, seductions, and agonies of my fellow-creatures !—when I knew it was *drawn from life*, the life of many an unfortunate victim of poverty, who preferred instant death by his own hands,\* to the lingering process, tending to the same consummation, dealt out by the merciless superintendents of the “ Union ” houses of bondage !

Nor could I, were I placed in your official situation, in addition to the non-enjoyment of the luxuries which report says, you, Gentlemen, at present so pre-eminently enjoy—nor could I, I repeat, ascend or descend the door-steps of my house, “ situate and being ” in some grand square, or *haut ton* street,—as, of course, were I one of you, it would be,—without being continually haunted with the fearful apprehension of having my eyes horrified, and my bosom torn to shudders, with the unnatural sight and indecent exposure of some poor seduced girl—seduced under the able superintendence of the New Poor-Law—once blue-eyed and beautiful—a father’s pet and joy—but now cold, famishing, broken-hearted,—giving birth, amidst the sneers of the dissolute and unfeeling, to the offspring of her sin and shame, on my very threshold !

Much less could I rattle, with dangerous velocity, as I have seen some of you do, my new and elegantly-appointed britzska, or landaulet Clarence, up and down the streets and thoroughfares, without fearing that every lurch given by the vehicle might, peradventure, be caused by the wheels’ craunching the body of some newborn little one, the “ baby of a girl,” abandoned in despair to the cold ground and colder hearts of the world, or, perhaps, more revolting still !—murdered by its erring mother, in a moment of mistaken pity, to preserve it from the sufferings and barbarities inevitably entailed on its helpless state by the New Poor-Law !

These, Gentlemen, are my reasons, and I am proud of them ! though by you and yours they may possibly be deemed squeamish, why I could not—dare not—accept a Commissionership ; and I hope they will prove reasons why you should throw up yours. Have they any effect in thawing the nether millstone with which, apparently, you have hitherto blocked up your hearts ? Or, is it possible, that if such horrible liabilities have never occurred to your minds, now they are vividly pointed out, you, calling yourselves men, men born of women, can continue to hold your unenviable, your disgraceful situations ?

You can !—Then as my draft on your feelings is dishonoured, I must even proceed to draw upon your fears ; and with that view (and, I trust, for the sake of humanity and public morals, effectually), I must borrow the wizard’s art, and exhibit to your consideration the shadow of what, ere long, you will perchance see terribly substantiated—an infuriated—a justly infuriated multitude, numerically banded thousands, but with one wild will—ferocious in aspect, and “ desperately mortal,”—curses on their famished lips, and vengeance in their broken hearts—determined, so help them, God ! every “ bloody brother ” of them, not to be massacred any longer by a few “ infernal lickspittles ! ”

Furthermore, I must show you this multitude, even in its mildest mood, simultaneously rising up, like haggard ghosts—the haggard, bleeding ghosts of the murdered !—in every part of the kingdom in which you shall have the temerity to make your unconstitutional appearance—every man of them amply provided with brick-bats, dead cats, rotten eggs, clubs, pikes, and, perchance, *deadlier* weapons ! to give you a reception adequate to the wrongs and sufferings you have been instrumental in inflicting on them and theirs : and, to complete

\* *Vide* the instance of the Widow Deacon, of Woburn, who, from the harsh treatment of the Guardians, in despair, drowned herself in the moat under Woburn Abbey, in the winter of 1837.

the presentment, in the memorable periods of the "Baviad," I must pourtray, for an example—a deterring example to the rest, the "hasty flight" \* of one of your order; and his ignominious, though, at the same time, certainly deserved persecutions, as he slinks from place to place, and enumerate

"——— Whene'er unearth'd, what pumps he bore,  
What horse-ponds, 'till the country he forswore,  
And chased by public vengeance up and down,  
(Hopeless of shelter), fled at length to Town!"

The above is only, as I have already said, the most lenient species of retribution, which, if you continue to give a loose to your Poor-Law barbarities, you can reasonably expect from the hands of those you have so inhumanly hunted down and proscribed; and well may it be for you and yours, if a concoction of brick-bats, horse-ponds, and "pullets'-sperm," are the only ingredients of the "mess" which is in preparatory brewing for you! But were I to prophesy, judging from the popular ebullitions of feeling, and irritable excitement on the subject, which I have seen and heard, I should foretell a darker conclusion to your labours. In corroboration of what I mean, is it requisite to refer you to the engravings and appropriate mottos affixed to the flags and ensigns at the anti-New Poor-Law gatherings which have already taken place? †

In conclusion, warningly, for your own sakes, and for the sakes of all who, at present, blush to call you countrymen—to avoid universal anarchy and the burning of another Bristol—I call upon you to beware! and to renounce your detestable employments. Hitherto, the people have suffered you to tread on them, like worms—crush them not, till, rising, they retaliate like snakes! for if you do, terrible, awful will be the retribution of their sting!

One word more, and I have done. Pizzaro, having arrived in the island of Gallo, seeing that his followers murmured, is said heroically to have drawn a line with his sword upon the sands, and bidden all who were for their leader and "golden joys," to cross it. In like manner, I now draw an imaginary line of propriety and humanity, and invoke all those of you who are not irrevocably lost to manhood and manhood's feelings, and who have the least particle of pity, the least hope of prospective rewards and punishments, the smallest consideration for your country and your country's peace, to resign your disgraceful commissions. In short, cry muffins with a bell, or grey peas "piping hot!"

\* Since this was first written several of these "hasty flights" of the Commissioners, "bloody with spurring, fiery-red with haste," have taken place; and the frequent "changes" of their districts and destinations tell how often. To show that these worthies are not without imminent and constant funk of a *bellyful*, vide *Globe*, July, 1838, wherein a whole string of their emigrations, from one Bastile *arrondissement* to another is detailed.

† Among the banners exhibited at the "Great Yorkshire Anti-Poor-Law Meeting," in 1837, one purporting to be a true and correct representation of the "*Poor-Law Commissioners drawing their wages*," was particularly significant and conclusive. My Friend Oastler, however, doesn't approve of such summary proceedings as regards their high *starverships*. He, some time ago, said, in a letter to Lord Brougham, "The only revenge I would take on the Commissioners and their Assistants is, that they be *Bastilled*, and fed upon skilly, and also that they be separated from their wives and from their children: that is all, my Lord. If I might have my way with them, I would '*moralize*' them, and '*independentize*' them, and '*asylumize*' them, somewhat in their own fashion; but I would not be so cruel as they are. I would not hurt a hair of their heads. They cut all the hair off the paupers when they dare. I would not tread-mill them either;—no, my Lord, *their own Bridgewater skilly would very soon make all their vitals swim down the common sewers of their own Bastiles!*" But what says my clever Anti-New Poor-Law comrade, the "*Suffolk Juror*," anent these same Somerset-house scourges? Hear him:—"Do you think that I would pull the Union houses down? No, indeed; I would first put in the 'No Patronage Whigs,' who give away public property to their own toad-eaters. I would then put in all the Commissioners that the places would hold; but I don't expect that there would be room for half the Commissioners that the Whigs have fastened upon us. I would then make 'Jack Ketch' Chief Commissioner, and if he did not keep them down on the *fifteen-penny-half-penny* scale, I would lash the rascal to the 'Halberts' at the door of the 'Old Bailey.'"



enroll yourselves among the "rig'lar dustmen," or the Anglo-Spanish Legion ; get "bound 'prentice to a waterman ;" become teachers of "dancing and the calisthenic exercise ;" write "Boz" fooleries, or Ainsworth atrocities ; or, having recourse to the last refuge of the destitute in intellect, proclaim, through the medium of the Sunday press, your unrivalled skill and cheapness as Upholsterers, Perfumers, Dentists, and Doctors of chimneys, and, as such, professionally advertize, that "Now is the time to marry, when bedrooms can be completely and substantially furnished by you for £10 ;" that "A fine head of hair can be easily obtained by use of your fashionable grease ;" that "loss of teeth, and decayed dittos, are supplied, and stopped by your sovereign succædaneum ; and that chimneys cannot smoke with your remarkable ranges ; or sell the "only general pectoral balsam of honey ;" or announce, with suitable emphatic notes of admiration, that "the warmest, the lightest, and the most elegant covering for a bed is the eider down quilt ;—do this—do anything, but continue to exhibit to the world the humiliating spectacle of several able-bodied men supported in idleness and luxury at the expense of the rate-payers of this kingdom !\*

I am, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

July 1, 1837.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

## ON THE CHOICE OF PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVES.

A FEW WORDS ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE AND ELECTORS OF ENGLAND, ON THE NEW POOR-LAW, ADVISING THEM NOT TO SUPPORT AT THE ELECTIONS, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, ANY CANDIDATE ADVOCATING, OR WHO HAS ADVOCATED, THE PRINCIPLES OF THAT ATROCIOUS AND BRUTAL MEASURE.†

"——— 'Poor-Law' bondmen, know ye not

Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow?"

O'CONNELL'S TOP-KNOT A LITTLE LOOSENED.

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,—A venal committee, prostituting its verdicts for the

\* Since this was first published I have discovered that these worthies have not been altogether so lazy and inactive as described in the text; for, in addition to their slaughter of thousands and tens of thousands of the poor by the jaw-bone of Malthus, they have been driving, it appears, various other new-fangled, but *profitable* centralization speculations, having, of course, for their object, the torturing of the poor, and the pocket-picking of the rich. The *Times* of Nov. 25, 1840, thus ably strips them, and shows their doings in nasty nakedness to the world:—

"The Poor-Law Commissioners, whose powers and pay were restricted to *five* years, as being amply sufficient to enable them to *unionise* the entire country, have been incessantly addicting themselves to divers dabbings not contemplated among the primary purposes of their appointment. For sometime they undertook an inquiry to establish the necessity of a New Rural Police, on which memorable occasion, when bent on furnishing a plea for an increase of Whig patronage, they actually invited and vindicated the evidence of *convicted thieves* (vide their Constabulary Commission Report), although, if a female victim of their workhouse rack happen to have had an illegitimate child, the chaplain, who sees, pities, and reports her ill-usage, is insolently told (vide the Rev. C. Fowell Watts, Chaplain of the Bath Union's case) by these trustees of convicts, that hers is a tainted testimony not to be believed, and the sooner *he* resigns the better. Scarcely had they finished their Rural Police diversion, so illustrative of their charitable *impartiality* in estimating evidence, ere we find them stealing a march across the borders, opening a Poor-Law intrigue with various parties in Scotland, with the view of eventually bringing that country under their domination, and more particularly endeavouring to usurp authority over the managers of the Edinburgh charity workhouse, who, in the first instance, questioned their assumed right of interference, and ultimately repulsed it by a large majority. Almost simultaneously with this, they next attempt to erect themselves into a Board of Health for preventing or mitigating the evils of epidemics in large towns; and, as their recent circular upon that subject sets forth various extracts from the New Police-Act, investing the Metropolitan Union men with sufficient correlative powers, which must have previously been arranged by the Commissioners themselves, we may fairly doubt whether, among other tinkeringings, these handy pluralists haven't been making themselves busy in framing Acts of Parliament."

In addition to these professions of theirs, may be added their "assault with intent, &c." on the Gilbert Unions, and their invariable exculpation and acquittal of their creatures when convicted of murder, rape, barbarity, and robbery, at Kensington, Bath, Sudbury, Crediton, Hoo, Eton, &c.

† This first appeared in July, 1837, at the time of the then general election; but it will



"vert and venison" of Whig patronage, and basely suffering itself to be controlled by the pressure of Whig influence, after cruelly playing with your expectations and feelings, wantonly wasting the public time, and prolonging for Downing-street purposes its farcical proceedings, has, at last, with the exception, the honourable exception, of one or two of its members,\* refused to do you justice!

Yes, this "Committee," most partially composed, and most disgracefully headed by that political Jeremy Diddler, and hop-o'-my-thumb statesman, Lord John Russell, has not only refused to do you ample justice, but, with a tyranny unparalleled in the annals of the worst tyrants, and with an inhumanity only conspicuous in the deeds of a Nero or a Herod, has even had the ruthless effrontery to deny you justice in part. In fine, its members have, with the most barbarous enthusiasm, since their inauguration, deprecated the smallest reform or minutest amendment of the atrocities—the tenfold atrocities—of that measure, which they were congregated seriously to consider, and were bound and pledged, as men of honour, conscientiously to mitigate, if not entirely to repress; and, to crown the whole of their barefaced deception and political jugglery, have unanimously, with the meritorious exceptions of Messrs. Walter and Fielden, virtually and definitely, by their utter indifference and faint blame, chronicled their shameful decision:—that the brutal and indecent clauses of the exterminatory statute, composed by the perfidious minds of England's miscreancy, the Whigs, are, according to their current quotations, *mild! excellent! and tender-hearted!* †

serve "excellently well" for any future, or all future occasions of the kind, till the Poor-Law be repealed.

\* Mr. Walter and Mr. Fielden.—The laurels of the warrior, snatched from many a well-fought field will fade, and the memory of the poet, chronicled in his "line with his land's language," will wax dim by time—but the generous exertions of the Members for Berkshire and Oldham for the cause of their poor and cruelly-oppressed countrymen, will long be remembered with admiration by all those, whose hearts have not forgotten to beat to feeling, and whose eyes have not ceased to brew a tear!—G. R. W. B.

† The following excerpts from Mr. Murphy's speech at the Anti-New Poor-Law Meeting, held at the Freemasons' Tavern, Feb. 19, 1838, will corroborate the statement of the text of the infamously *packed* and perfidious manner in which the Committee was conducted:—

"Exactly opposite to the Chairman was seated Mr. Penny-a-liner Chadwick, supported on either side at his back by a string of Assistant-Commissioners, and four or five messengers, the latter of course kept there for the purpose, if the emergency should arise, of being sent off with a message for documents to the head-quarters at Somerset-house. By-and-by, a question was put, and an answer given, which probably was not altogether calculated to add to the popularity of the measure, when up got this Mr. Chadwick, and off he walked to Mr. Miles, or to Mr. Poulett Scrope, or some other such member, and put into his hand another question, or a series of questions, the answer to which, from its nature, would remove, to a certain extent, the impression of its objectionable predecessor. That was the way in which the inquiry was conducted. Did anybody ever hear of such a course of procedure?"

Again, Mr. Murphy said:—

"He had also been present when evidence was adduced of an unfavourable tendency to the views of the supporters of the New Law; and, on one of those occasions, he observed no fewer than 11 Assistant-Commissioners supported by Mr. Penny-a-liner Chadwick, each of whom was continually handing up questions to suit the particular purposes of the New Bill to the various members of the Committee. He had also been present when messengers had been sent off by Mr. Chadwick to Somerset-house, and had quickly returned with papers and documents, all or many of which were, at a convenient opportunity, handed in to the Committee. Could there, he would ask, be a fair inquiry, when the investigation was conducted under such circumstances? Was it possible, then, for any individual to stand against the Poor-Law Commissioners when they were allowed to have recourse to such means, as he had described, to screen their acts?"

Earl Stanhope, in the House of Lords, March 18, 1839, showed that the Committee in the House of Lords was carried on in the same partial and unfair manner. He said,—

"In every part of the examination before the Committee, there were to be found attempts to confute and confuse witnesses who were against the New Poor-Law system. He thought those examinations had been, in some instances, pursued in a most pettifogging spirit."

Again, speaking of the Committee in the House of Commons, Mr. Fielden, Aug. 7, 1838, said,—

"He had hopes that the Committee would have gone into a full examination of the rate-payers and labourers of those Unions, as well as into the examination of Commissioners, Guardians, and Officers of the New Law. But he had been grievously disappointed. The Committee had been engaged no less than thirty-six days and a-half in examining Commissioners and Guardians. Indeed, the Commissioners alone had taken twenty days out of the fifty-two days that the whole examination had taken up."

So much for the promised honourable candour, the unprejudiced investigation, the moral, the uncompromising integrity, which, according to the Ministerial journals—those grande Napoleons of the realms of humbuggery!—were to characterize the meek philanthropists, the humane Quixotes, whom the Melbourne administration were so graciously pleased, out of more than woman's tenderness, to incorporate (with "power to add to their number,") expressly to right the grievances of the people; and, if any imperfections had crept into the new admirable system of pauper jurisprudence ("barin" those aforesaid little accidental imperfections) so widely celebrated for its mild dispensations—to amend them, with all the legislative prowess, and benevolent acumen, they, the appointed "Committee-men and trustees," were masters of!

Fine promissory notes! words of the first twaddle! for whose prophesied fulfilment see the blessed columns of the immaculate *Morning Chronicle*.

"But what good came of them at last?  
Quoth little Peterkin."

Why, simply, the honourable candour has turned out to be most dishonourable dissimulation,—the unprejudiced investigation, most party malevolence,—and the moral, the uncompromising integrity, has openly shown itself, like a Bridgenorth election, or a certain lordling's back, to be all of one side; and that, as any one, but the most simple, might have expected, in favour of the continuance of, my fellow-countrymen, your starvation, your suicides, your utter demoralization, your despair, and all the other tributary horrors the New Poor-Law has entailed, and will entail, on you and yours.

But is this to be borne? Are you to be starved, abused, promise-crammed, deceived, massacred? your wives debauched; your daughters violated; your homes defiled; yourselves dragged, like felons, to prison "Unions;" the very laws of nature disregarded in your persons? Are you to suffer this and have no redress? to be trodden under foot with the mire and the reptile, and be allowed no retribution on your brutal oppressors? Forbid it, humanity! forbid it, justice! No; at this contest, virtually to be fought, not between Whig and Tory, as of old, but between the friends of humanity on one side, and the supporters of inhumanity on the other—you will have revenge!

Do not, then, out of justice to yourselves, and the poor wretches you daily see agonized beyond endurance, and perishing foodless in the streets, again elect those men, as your representatives, who have so wantonly, so barbarously assisted the introduction of a measure, fraught with such atrocities as the New Pauper-edict in question. Do not, I reiterate, by returning them, give them the power, at some future time, when your poorer brethren have been goaded to rebellion by much and repeated cruelty, to head the soldiery and police force in their murderous charge on their famished and emaciated bodies!

To undermine your resolution, and degrade your judgments, much specious chicanery, doubtless, will be employed, and much gold, treasury gold, applied, to inveigle you to support the enemies of the people, the recreant M.P.'s who had advocated the misery and massacre "bill." You will be told, peradventure, as Lord John Russell had the assurance to announce to your fellow-countrymen

A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, of April, 1837, also, fortells the too probable "res gestæ" of the Committee in question:—

"The working of the New Poor-Law is now submitted to the process of Parliamentary investigation—a consummation achieved through the dauntless energies of that friend of the people, the member for Berkshire, but from the result we have no anticipations of justice; a packed Ministerial Committee will labour to suppress, not elucidate, truth."

After hearing this evidence, it is laughable to hear the other side. The Commissioners, in one of their accredited "utensils" (*The Companion to the Almanac* for 1839), designate the Parliamentary inquirers as we have been analyzing, as "three Parliamentary Committees (one of the Lords and two of the Commons) which have instituted a most searching (Well done, Edwin Chadwick! Half-a-pound of Epsom salts is nothing to you!) and severe scrutiny before the organization of the system was completed!!!"



of Stroud, that the Duke of Wellington approves, and has lauded the new system of pauper extermination. But let this specious application of "thus with the Duke, thus hath the Duke inferred," have no preponderance over your better judgments; for the deeds of the small Lord John Russell, as exhibited in the heinous workings of the New Poor-Law Bill, are anything but right, they are unjustifiable, they are brutal, and the approval of such deeds by the Duke, high and illustrious by heroism as he is, is certainly wrong, vastly unbecoming his great name, and impolitic in the extreme; and his having so expressed himself, will tear a laurel from his brow, a eulogy from his future marble in "Westminster's old abbey!"

But to proceed:—Nor, much less, if you are not led astray by the sophistry of the enemy, and are deaf to the specious ingenuity of their spouting charmers, let their dross-corrupting "dabs in the fists" of their paltry £20, £50, and £100 cheques, have any dominion over your principles; for such will be liberally applied by the friends of those, who, having already sold thousands of you to bondage and the "Union" workhouses, to serve their purposes and pension their profligate supporters, would now purchase those voters of you, who yet survive from the already wholesale system of extermination, that they may, at no distant period, in like manner, dispose of you. Let not appliances of this nature, I again make repetition, overcome the free disposal of your franchises, for every man that does so succumb to such malign influence, betrays his brother beings, and delivers them over, bound hand and foot, to the "Union" houses of bondage, and inevitable slaughter. Therefore, beware! touch not, handle not, for their gold is the price of blood!

Neither, in addition to these stumblingblocks to principle, suffer the consciousness of individual prosperity to harden your hearts and cancel your consideration for the wrongs and agonies of the victims of the New Poor-Law. Prosperity, however affluent, is uncertain in this weather-vane world! The rich merchant, whose argosies to-day unload millions of commerce—to-morrow, has often been the ruined and despairful man! Say not, therefore, in the complacent fulness of your much wealth, "This Poor-Law question, heinous as it certainly is, touches not us; we will, therefore, vote for the Whig candidate, because he has promised to get our son a *place in the Excise*, or has offered to substantiate our daughter in the household of the Premier," for who knows what may happen before you die! Previous to that event, by some unseen and not-to-be-controlled stroke of fate, you and yours may be made amenable to all its horrors! In a word, your wife may be debauched, your daughter seduced, your son a houseless wanderer, and you yourself dragged to rot in the unwholesome dungeons of the Bastile "Unions;" for the new order of things legally encourages and holds out a premium for all such malefactions.

Then again, for your own sakes, and for the sakes of those who look up to you for protection, and who, one day requiring your assistance, may be involved in the helplessness of want and wretchedness, vote not for those who have proscribed the unoffending and suffering poor; but chronicle your suffrages for those, and those only, who will definitely promise to advocate the total repeal of this odious and barbarous measure, and to send to the right-about, or to the penal settlements, the disgraceful clique of briefless barristers and paltry penny-a-liners, the cancer and scrofula of the land, which it has called from the lowest depths of debauchery, ignorance, and professional incapacity, to affluence and official potentiality.

I cannot conclude this address, without endeavouring to instil into your minds the great responsibility you hold in your hands; and if I were an orator, and could boast the gifted periods of a Sheridan or a Pitt, a Phillips or an Oastler, I would show that on your votes, given at the elections, depend the happiness or misery of thousands, the enfranchisement or the degradation of tens of thousands. I would show you, that if, by your exertions in the cause



of humanity, you return a majority of Poor-Law repealers and anti-Unionists to the next Parliament, how many girls yet unborn, meek-eyed things, their parents' joy! who, under the present disgraceful system, through their poverty, would be inevitably betrayed to the lust of the dissolute rake or hoary villain, might be preserved in the healthful paths of virtue! how many aged couples, now in the years of youth and thoughtlessness, but doomed by inexorable after-circumstances, and the heartless agency of the pauper laws, to be torn, ruthlessly torn from each other, amidst the jeers of the brutish officials, might be permitted to pass to their graves in companionship and peace! how many wretched creatures about to be driven to madness and despair by the operations of this oppressive statute, if you did your duty, would have had the suicidal tube and the carotid-artery-cutting knife wrested from their hands! and last, though not least, by your strenuous opposition to Whig ascendancy, how many sad revolting scenes of starvation and utter destitution may be spared, how many heart-rending and indecent exposures of births and deaths in the public streets might be avoided! \*

Fellow-countrymen! one word more, and I have done. You have now the means of redressing your grievances in your own hands. In the poetic gush, then, of the immortal Milton—

“Awake! arise! or be for ever fallen!”

Return repealers of the slaughtering Whig edict, and you may yet be saved,† yet be righted. Send the apostate and “bloody” Whigs as your representatives, and hereafter don't complain of the wrongs and cruelties they will plenteously heap upon you, for if you do, who will commiserate you? having had the means of salvation in your power, and not using those means, you will remain deservedly “unrespected, unpitied, unreprieved!”

I am, Fellow-Countrymen,

Your true well-wisher,

August, 1837.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

\* Such, for instance, as the birth and death of the poor woman, Anne Griffin's babe in London streets, both of which events took place in a cab, Oct. 18, 1840, and because the inhuman officials of Lambeth, St. James's, and St. Giles's Workhouses, “according as the Act directs,” refused to admit the unfortunate creature, though she told each and all she was about to be taken in labour! What a blessed “boon” the New Poor-Law is to the “female population!” Continue to approve of, and support its administration, ye Melbournes and Grantley Berkeleys; it becomes *you* so to do!

† Such men, with hearts in their bosoms, as the Hon. W. Duncombe, T. S. Duncombe, Esq., Hon. Col. Lowther, Gen. Johnson, Sharman Crawford, Esq., John Walter, Esq., John Fielden, Esq., B. D'Israeli, Esq., Fitzroy Kelly, Esq., Ormsby Gore, Esq., and a few other right real men of feeling, whose names I could add, not forgetting the “Old Tory King,” and Gen. Sir Charles Napier, of whom I cannot resist here inserting a little deserved “laus.” The Napiers are all fine fellows, and the following “bit o' writin'” would have been a lancer-feather even in Wellington's cap, only he has chosen to wear a bunch of the Somersetshire Commissioners' blood-red recruiting ribbands in his:—

“No one manifested more of the true spirit of philanthropy, during the time Nottingham was under excitement through the great depression of trade, than he who has the command of the troops in the Northern district, General Sir Charles Napier, who then resided in Nottingham. When he beheld the famishing artisans parading the streets unemployed—when he saw them dragging carts, laden with sand, and begging from door to door, like common vagrants, the kind feelings of his heart moved him to inform her Majesty's ministers of the true state of the suffering poor, which induced them to remit a hundred pounds to me, on their behalf. His house was daily thronged by the destitute, and his money freely distributed to feed and clothe the starving poor. His charity flowed like the deep and silent stream, and gladdened many hearts with its effects; for he had a heart-felt pleasure in relieving the distressed. He saw with me the cruel operation of the New Poor-Law, and complained of its mismanagement in Nottingham; he beheld the “just grievances” of the deserving poor, and mourned over them; his countenance gladdened with pleasure when I communicated to him any means raised for their relief. Our hearts and feelings mingled into one, during this trial of suffering, and produced such friendship as nothing but death can dissolve. To him the town, the poor, and myself are deeply indebted—more than I can, or it would now be proper to express; and while he showed his fidelity to the trust reposed in him, he also manifested that he was a true philanthropist.”

So writes W. Roworth, Esq., Mayor of Nottingham, in his “*Observations on the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham*,” and I can, without hesitation, write, that he has shown himself (as his native Nottingham can attest) the “great sublime” he, in his sketch of General Napier's benevolence, has drawn so eloquently.

## A FEW WORDS,

ADMONITORY AND CAUTIONARY, ADDRESSED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ENSUING PARLIAMENT,\*—MORE ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO, DEFEATING WHIG CANDIDATES, CAME IN UPON THE PROMISE, OR SUPPOSITION, OF THEIR VOTING FOR THE REPEAL OF THE ATROCITIES OF THE NEW POOR-LAW.

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“England expects every man to do his duty!”—NELSON’S BATTLE-WORD.

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MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—Previous to the late elections I indited a letter on the New Poor-Law, addressed to the electors and people of this kingdom, advising them, without having any regard to parties or partialities, to return no candidates as their representatives, whatsoever their talents or capabilities, who were advocates of the present infamous system of Poor-laws. They have taken my advice, and, in the recent contests, with a few exceptions, have done their duty—their duty to humanity, to themselves, their wives and little ones; for, true to their own interests—their *real* interests—and not unmindful of the cruel and injurious wrongs that a corrupt and heartless faction has and would inflict on them and theirs, or permitting their judgments to be biassed or misled by the specious representations and Utopian speculations of their enemies,—they have wisely allowed the respective faiths, or declamatory cries, of Whig, Tory, and Radical, to make no impression—popularity or abilities, to be no extenuation—but simply made the elections (as it was fit) a question of humanity or inhumanity—a political *pas d’armes* held in the boroughs and counties, between those who were for their extermination on one side, and those who were for their constitutional protection on the other; and, as such, with the greatest impartiality, and by way of signal warning to future Parliamentary delinquents, have cushioned *Joseph Hume* in Middlesex, cashiered *James Graham* in Cumberland, and left *Banker Grote* in a majority of considerable contempt:† and this, as has been said, without any regard to the political faiths or pristine popularity of these several candidates, but merely because they had recorded their votes in favour of tyranny and oppression, and were (without the least remorse) for letting them (the people) out, like a “tenement, or pelting farm,” for the private welfare and advantage of a few briefless barristers and paltry penny-a-liners, men notoriously incapacitated by their ignorance and impotence to rise in their own professions; and who, unabled, as a resource, to scribble novels like Edward Lytton Bulwer, or to subsist on buffonery and the fag-ends of low farce, like “Boz” Dickens, were, as my Uncle Toby would express it, “born to nothing but their cruelty, their impudence, and their *commissions*!”

But to proceed and recapitulate my premises. In the late elective contentions, the people of England have nobly and decidedly exhibited their hatred of oppression; and have *pretty significantly* shown their determination not to be trodden in the dust by the merciless shoon of a “lickspittle” commissionocracy; in brief, they constitutionally, without favour or qualification, revenged their wrongs, vindicated their rights, and have done *their* duties. And now, my Lords and Gentlemen, that the elections are over, in the next assemblage of the states-general in Parliament, it only remains for you to do *yours*, and give your unqualified hostility, on every occasion of its discussion, to the continuancy of the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act as a statute of this realm.‡

\* The Session of 1838. This letter, however, may be perused with beneficial results by newly-elected M.P.’s antecedent to the assembling of the next, or any future Parliament, until the New Poor-Law be erased from the book of Statutes.

† Facts—*stubborn facts*.

‡ How many M.P.’s, who won their seats victoriously in the general election spoken of in the text, by their loud, lusty, and apparently cordial indignant denouncement of the New Poor-Law on the hustings, have since constantly voted in the House, with the oppressors of



Such Parliamentary service will, assuredly, not only be *expected*, but required of you by your respective constituents; for, by *that tenure*, all of you,

the poor—or invariably absented themselves whenever a motion for the repeal, *in toto*, or in part, of the heinous “Act” has been proposed. Alas, alas! Well might a writer in the *Westminster Review*, of Oct. 1837, afterwards sneer—“It would have been fatal to the Tories at the late elections if their anti-Poor Law professions had been generally credited.” But I trust the *cruel and unmanly* perfidy of the turncoats in question will, in every instance, meet due retribution. The following excerpts from *Mr. Blakey’s Letters on the Poor-Law*, deserve to be taken into serious consideration at the next and every succeeding election until the New Poor-Law be extinguished.—“Do not slacken your efforts by any childish fears about the *Conservatives’* getting into office. You cannot change for the *worse*; whatever change there may be, will prove for your advantage. No matter who agreed to place the burden on your shoulders; the question for you is, *who will help to take it off?* Try to turn the present ministers out of office, and *they will try to get in again by relieving you of the Bill*. If they remain, they will grind you to powder; for every thorough-paced Whig is worse than an Egyptian taskmaster by nature, education, and habits.” Again he advises:—“Be not misled with names. Let no man deceive you by talking about *liberal policy*, liberal government, national freedom, and suchlike: ask him if he be for the *New Poor-Law Act*, and if he says ‘Yes,’ set him down as a tyrant of the worst description, and spurn him from your dwelling” So say I. But if would-be M.P.’s will not take the hint, but still attempt to woo you, with Corn-law cant, no Tithes temptations, Household Suffrage civilities, anti-Pope protestations, Hill-Coolie consolation, &c., and other wily warbles, to your political undoing, and will not pledge an unqualified repeal of the New Poor-Massacre Law, heed them not, but

With folded arms and steady eyes,  
And little fear and less surprise,  
Look upon them as they stay—

for the time is gone by—*or ought to be*,—when candidate peerlings and puppies, with guineas in their mouths, and places in the Excise in their pockets, could

——— Vow with such a passion, swear with such a grace,  
That it is heaven to be deluded by them.

No, no; fellow-countrymen, the only political question that ought to engage your attention at present, should be one of *bread, beef, clothes, and cottages*: it will be time enough, hereafter, to agitate Corn-law, Suffrage, and Hill-Coolies, when you possess, every man and man’s son and daughter of you, those fundamental necessities. The New Poor-Law emphatically declares you shall not have those necessities: down, then, directly with the New Poor-Law. He, be he who he may, or what he may, is no *real, disinterested friend*, who gives you any different advice or counsel! Among the multitude of members who *achieved their seats*, at the last election, by *fraudulent* pratings of *no poverty and no Bastilles*, on the hustings, *was*, the *honourable* representative of the city of Hereford, *Higford Burr, Esq.*, and among the many of that “*clarum genus*,” who have subsequently *thought it expedient to protest against* their former anti-New Poor-Law protestations, declaring the same to have been “*hey nonny nonny*,” is also the aforesaid Higford Burr *hight*. In this he has certainly followed, at heel, his superiors in the same line of business, and only, perhaps, done what it was reasonable to have expected from a dashing, young country gentleman, whose private character (it is but fair to say, whatever his political faults may be) can bear the strictest scrutiny for stupidity, and whose conduct has long exhibited the most unexceptionable testimonials of his utter incapacity to represent any constituency, except the one he does represent, and which is mostly composed of *tailors and such as like cash prices for their plumpers*. Well, the other day, having, in my benevolent desire to forward the welfare of this work, forgotten my *pride*, and the memory of my fine ancestral relative, the Nonconformist, Richard Baxter, I, in a vacant moment, wrote to this *puissant legislator*, and requested him to subscribe towards it. This is a verbatim copy of the pretty scripture he returned me, sealed, I must not forget to say, with a very fierce and ferocious-looking crest, viz., a man in iron regimentals, up to his middle in a turret, or a gilet-tart, extending a lance, in anything but an amicable manner, with a pennon to it, as much as to say, “*Tremble! to-morrow’s washing-day!*”

“Gayton-Hall, August 19, 1840.

“SIR,—Although I may originally have been opposed to the New Poor-Law, still I never introduced that measure in any of my speeches or addresses (O Higford! Higford!) to my constituents in a political light; and from what I have observed of the working of that law, I do not consider I should be acting right in endeavouring to promote or keep alive any ill feeling that may exist towards it, and must therefore respectfully beg to decline subscribing towards the work you have it in contemplation to publish.

“I remain, your obedient servant,

“HIGFORD BURR.”

“G. R. Wythen Baxter, Esq., &c.

This Burr, be it understood, formed one of Mr. Fielden’s minority of 17 for the Repeal of the New Poor-Law, Feb. 1838. It is not, perhaps, generally known, that this Mr. Higford Burr is the *original of Tittleback Titmouse* in Mr. Warren’s clever epic of “*Ten Thousand a-Year*” in *Blackwood’s Magazine*.



with the exception of those who have openly declared yourselves enemies of the people, and well-wishers of this brutal and exterminating decree, hold your seats. In most instances, you have been pledged to do so; and even in those cases where the delicate generosity of your electors forebore to exact a definite pledge, it was only through confidence in your *truth*, your *honour*, your *humanity*; so, in fact, where no promises have been requested, the greater is the obligation on your parts, my Lords and Gentlemen, to act more strenuously, more devotedly, in their behoof. Collectively—ay, *individually*, believe me, my Lords and Gentlemen, much may be achieved for your fellow-beings—the poor, the helpless, the broken-hearted—by your exertions in the next session, when, imperatively, some measure of amelioration or reform of the present injurious and unjust pauper proscription must be brought forward, if not a total repeal (the only redress which will, depend upon it, ultimately satisfy the outraged feelings of the British nation), at any rate, a merciful and timely mitigation of its extreme and brutal clauses must ensue, or the kingdom will be deluged with civil slaughter and terrible disaster.

Yes! if, by your unanimous support in the division, a relief, corresponsive to the urgency of the poor's sufferings, cannot immediately be procured, in the meanwhile, for the present, by your endeavours, a cessation of active and extreme cruelties against the pauper, which is something, may be obtained. So that, if the children of want and misfortune cannot be enfranchised from their unconstitutional imprisonment in the Bastile dungeons—at least, they may occasionally be allowed to see their friends, breathe the fresh air, and look upon the blue sky; if they are not to be treated *better* than the felon and the murderer in the strongholds of justice, at least they may be placed on something more like an equality as to allotted indulgencies and personal comforts, with those legal offenders: if they are prohibited to receive the proper sustenance which the periodical and ample subscriptions of the rate-payers have benevolently provided for their nourishment, at least they may enjoy the digestion of food somewhat less “coarse” and *Broughamlike* in quality, and somewhat more nutritious and efficient in quantity, than at present.

Furthermore, if the premium offered to seduction, “according as the Act directs,” cannot be cashiered, but, for the *convenience* of the profligate supporters of the Whigs, must be retained, at least by your interference, the sad and frail victims of its injustice may be rescued from actually dying of hunger, and from outraging humanity and public decency, by giving birth to the offspring of their sin and sorrow in the open streets and thoroughfares. If, too, the persecuted sons of wretchedness cannot legally be preserved from official agonies and anguish, at least, they may be kept from using the throat-cutting knife and cord of suicide. And if the cause of the paupers' complaints cannot be removed, at least, by your speaking out, their tyrants may be induced, through fear and consequential results, “to leave,” as Starveling has it, “the killing out when all is done!”

And lastly, should you, by your benevolent endeavours in the cause of humanity and your fellow-beings, be unable, through the malignancy of your antagonists, to mitigate their sufferings—should you, I make repetition, be powerless to avert their destruction—as a final exhibition in their favour, you can make intercession, and exact the small boon, that after death they may not be treated with dishonour; may, at least, be allowed the decent respect of a bell to toll to their graves, and something more seemly than “*coffins composed of elm boards three-quarters-of-an-inch thick*,”\* in which to sepulchre their abused and famished remains.

Much as anything, save a total repeal and re-organization of the New Poor-Law Act must be deprecated, yet should the alternate applications of shame,

\* *Vide* the “Union Tenders,” in the Newspapers.

fear, and the sense of humanity and justice, prove ineffectual to wring that desideratum from the people's oppressors—the never-to-be-too-much-abhorred supporters of this wholesale cruelty and oppression—to alleviate the present horrors and excruciating sufferings of your fellow-beings, is a consummation, my Lords and Gentlemen, worth *striving for*; and if, through your endeavours, it be obtained, will receive their lasting gratitude and remembrance. Therefore, in verification of the adage, that “half-a-loaf is better than no bread,” (and it is literally a matter of bread or starvation in the present instance), if you cannot obtain full and ample justice for them, you are bound by honour and humanity to mitigate, as far as lies in the power of your votes given in the senate, their misery and distress; indeed, as men of honour and humanity you have no other alternative.

But should some of you be so lost to gratitude, so unthankful for benefits received at the present hustings-places, as to betray the trusts reposed in you; and, either through the enticement of Whig patronage, or dread of Whig retribution, side with the enemies of the people to perpetuate the poor man's slavery and degradation—or, guiltless of this downright deceit and tergiversation, should any of you, when the Poor-Law question is brought before the House, be induced to neglect your duty under the miserable plea of *absence*—if not for the sake of humanity, and the many thousands of poor wretches, who rely upon you to succour them—on your own accounts, *think of Sir James Graham's fate*!\* and, as you value your future returns, pause before you so far and irretrievably commit yourselves; and, for a moment bear in mind, that boroughs are not now so “plentiful as blackberries,” or even as friends. You may, according to Byron, “go to the coffee-house and take another” of the latter; but to possess yourselves with duplicates of the former, is not so easy; inasmuch as the deceiver, in that case, is only one, but the deceived are many—and those many *thoughtful of the past, and provident for the future*.

It is true, in the height of their fancied security and parliamentary potentiality as veritable M.P.'s, some of you, my Lords and Gentleman, may have the temerity to slight this advice; and, totally regardless of past promises (or respecting them merely as hustings' pledges, made but to be broken!) recreantly support the cause of cruelty and oppression—the very cause they were elected to oppose—and this under the delusion, that the day for affording an account of their stewardship is too distant to be dreaded; the prospect of meeting their indignant constituencies too remote to disturb their unenviable equanimity; and, in the spirit of this dishonourable daring, may cherish the mistaken idea, that, neglect as they may their representative duties—betray as they choose the sacred trust reposed in their hands—as Allan Ramsay says—

“There's nane daur ca' it rude!”

Or, at the worst, in the event of their being called upon to defend their official treacheries and deceptions, they can easily invoke a little cajolery, and with a few sweet saucy words of specious extenuation, smooth, 'till it smile again, the irritation of the “greasy citizens” and country yokels.

It is well, very well; but let no member, who calls himself an honourable man, betray the sacred confidence placed in his hands by his confiding constituents! or, if he betray it, have recourse to such mean, such contemptible expedients to extenuate the betrayal.

One word more in conclusion. The People of England, my Lords and Gentlemen, expect much—everything from your exertions in their behalf at the approaching meeting of Parliament. By their united and spirited efforts in returning you, they have performed their part,—have forestalled their gratitude:

\* Sir James Graham, it is well known, lost his election for East Cumberland, in 1837, owing to his extreme partiality for *skilly*. I trust now, however, his taste is improved by experience.



'twill be yours then to do yours, and extricate them from the Slough of Despond in which they have been hurled by the execrable workings of the New Poor-Law, and rescue them from the worst despotism—the despotism of the three “lickspittle” autocrats—that ever ground a noble and generous people to the dust. Relying upon your protection, the eyes of all the sufferers are turned to you as their saviours. Be those saviours, and you erect an obelisk of gratitude—lively gratitude—in every islandic breast: forsake them in their hour of need, and side with the abettors of tyranny and oppression—and, farewell! those of your order, who do so, will, after the next dissolution, *have to pay the postage of their letters!*\*

I am, my Lords and Gentlemen,

With the greatest respect, your obedient servant,

August 17, 1837.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

### A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO JOHN WALTER, ESQ., THE POOR MAN'S FRIEND, AND LATE M.P. FOR BERKSHIRE, CONTAINING AN HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO THAT GENTLEMAN'S BENEVOLENT EXERTIONS IN THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY AND THE OPPRESSED VICTIMS OF THE NEW POOR-LAWS.

“I do not know you, and may never know  
Your face—but you have acted on the whole  
Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.”—BYRON'S DON JUAN.

“The drying up a single tear has more  
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore.”—IBID.

SIR,—Among the many who appreciated your generous and unceasing endeavours throughout the whole of last session in behalf of suffering poverty and outraged justice, permit me most respectfully, most cordially, as an humble fellow-enthusiast in the same charitable arena, to include myself; and thus publicly, in companionship with the beating hearts and lively gratitude of thousands, to express my admiring sense of one, who alone, unsupported (with the spirited exceptions of Mr. Daniel Whittle Harvey and Mr. John Fielden), out of the collective representation of the three kingdoms, nobly stood forward, amidst the jeers of the heartless, the neglect of the careless, and the “outcry wild,” and savage yells of the partisan and slave† “mocked, yet triumphant, sneered at, unsubdued,”—to assert the rights and deprecate the horrible barbarities, inflicted without the least compunction, as the devilish principles of the New Poor-Law Act direct, on the wronged and suffering poor.

Such humane exertions as yours, Sir, characterised as they were by the greatest disinterestedness and the purest benevolence, deserve universal commen-

\* This was written when there were *franks* on the face of the earth, or rather of letters, and before postages were paid by plaster and spittle.

† During Mr. Walter's Godlike advocacy of the rights and liberties of the poor and helpless, in the session of 1837, he was continually interrupted in the House by the most savage and brutal conduct of the Ministerial creatures and adherents—“by,” to use the words of a weekly paper of that period, “the braying of donkeys and lowing of calves, to the crowing of cocks and hisses of snakes”—all of which discordant sounds were used to intimidate and drown his benevolent endeavours. “By Whigs and Radicals conjointly (says a writer in *Blackwood*, of April, 1837), he was assailed, interrupted, and insulted, all to stifle the expression of hateful facts, and drown the voice of the speaker—happily in vain. The interruptions, said the fearless orator, within the wall of that house—even if they amount to the howlings with which the neighbourhood rang two nights ago, shall not prevent me from making known the cries of the poor out of it.” (He alluded to the disgraceful yells with which the Ministerial pack had saluted Lord Lyndhurst).



dation, and much more eloquent encomia than it is in the power and limited capacity of a "poor devil of an author," like myself, to bestow. Nevertheless, *malgré* my unworthiness for the pleasing task, and in these days of universal heartlessness, pleasing it is to record the godly deeds and gracious actions of the philanthropist, I cannot allow this opportunity to slip, without exhibiting to my fellow-countrymen, how active, how benevolent, were your intentions in their behalf; and if those intentions could have been practically verified, and had not been counteracted by the prevalence of a malign opposition, composed of the disgraceful outpourings of all parties, how much they would have had to bless you for—how deeply they would have remained your debtors! In a word, I would show them, as through the prospective of a wizard's glass, the what might have been, and draw a parallel between it and the what is, and worse, what too surely will be, the results of your kind-hearted endeavours having been frustrated.

Briefly, then, I would show them, that had your meritorious attempts been joined with correspondent success, how many a wretched son of poverty—friendless, homeless, careless, and lonely—doomed, by the abominable workings of the Broughamite slaughter decree, to be punished more severely than the murderer and the thief—and suffered to die of hunger, amidst the mockery of abundance, in the hard-paved streets of London\*—might have received sufficient protection and support! How many a despairful man, driven by inexorable need to utter hopelessness, and bent upon the destruction of himself, his wan wife, or famishing little ones,—might have had the dreadful appliances of self-slaughter and horrent murders timely wrested from his frantic grasp; and, by gentle care and pitying attentions, soothed to lay aside his fearful determination, and live, and not to take his own life or imbrue his hands in the heart-blood of his nearest and dearest! How many a seduced girl, too,—a good man's child—an Englishman's daughter—the victim, alas! of the libertine's depraved desires—those desires so fostered and encouraged by the infamous Bastardy Clause!—might have been rescued from her shameful fate,—the immodest exposure of bringing into the world her innocent offspring of sin, and from suffering all the agonizing throes and pains of childbed, amidst the grinning mockery and unhallowed gaze of the dissolute and the ruffian, in the public streets, as, since the workings of the New Poor-Law, has often—*too often, been the case!*

Furthermore, I would point out to their observance, and consequently to their gratitude, how many an abused, starved, and famished pauper, now imprisoned, like the perpetrator of a hundred murders, in the dungeons of the "Bastile Unions"—denied the sight of his friends—public intercourse with his God—and proper medical assistance when persecuted to a shadow,—might (had the late member for Berkshire had his will) have been delivered from a slow death, worked out by a few superficial spoonful of water gruel, composed of ground bean-stalks, or some such rubbish, and restored once more to the fresh air and those he loved! And how many a heart—now so withered—might have bloomed again with the flower of gladness—of woman's gladness—at the prospect of once more beholding the well-known faces of father, husband, brother, friend—long—too long caged by inhuman oppression, and kept by prescribed tyranny from their families—

"And will I see his face again?  
And will I hear him speak?  
I am down-right dizzy with the joy.  
In troth, I am like to greet!"

And lastly, Sir, to crown the whole, and recount the many salutary results

\* Let the reader peruse a file of any newspaper for the winters passed since the introduction of the New Poor-Law, and, to speak within compass, almost every week's number will be found to contain two or three horrent instances of "Death by Destitution;" and God only knows how many others happened in those dreary periods which were never made public!

which would have accrued from, your praiseworthy speculations, I would specify how much crime—murders, suicides, infanticides, fœticides, seductions, robberies, and riots (for such are, and will be, in great abundance, the fruits of the New Poor-Laws!) might have been prevented: how much human degradation, cruelty, immorality, and oppression, might have been spared; while the kingdom, irrevocably ruined if the new system of pauper jurisprudence be continued, (for who, if our population, our “bold peasantry,” are exterminated, are to fight her foes, man her ships, conduct her manufactories, and till her fields?)—might have been saved!

Besides all this, what an ignominious stain would have been removed from off our national shield, had the repeal of the odious enactment, so loudly and universally (with the well-greased exception of its pauper “flunkies”) reprehended, taken place. Then the satirical mimics of the stranger’s land could not, as now, have jeered our countrymen with their cannibalism and ridiculous inconsistency: “See! there go the G—d d—ns! who one year award twenty millions of hard cash to free their well-fed and well-clothed blacks abroad; and the next settle somewhat like £100,000 a-year on four-and-twenty “lick-spittles,” to enslave and massacre (which they do *a merveille!*) their own naked and famishing countrymen at home!—*Voilà!* the next time we have a breeze with their government, their *pièces de resistance* will not be quite so tremendous! Bah! with their “coarse food,” and “Union” system, they’ll breed no more Nelson’s “Agamemnons” now!

Ah! Sir, had your benevolent, your patriotic design been properly sustained by the votes of your fellow-representatives, “What,” to use the words of our late sailor Monarch, William the Fourth, when the battle-flag, commemorative of the fight at Waterloo, was brought him, while lying on his couch of death—“What a glorious day it would have been for England!” what a glorious day for England’s people! Instead of tyranny and oppression—a tyranny and oppression unknown in the annals of the worst despots—they would have had justice and humanity; instead of being torn by brutal officials from their familiar homes and dearest relatives—their domestic hearths would have been respected, and their personal liberties and natural sympathies held sacred and inviolable; instead of being doomed to behold their fair-faced daughters and modest wives delivered over shrieking to the villain’s lust, they would have had the grateful satisfaction of knowing, that they (their fond ones) were, which they are not now, under the protection of the laws.

And, a consummation, perhaps as desirable as any, their brutal oppressors, the wolfish commissioneracy, and all their attendant underling miscreancy of “Guardians,” “Relieving Officers,” “Union” Clerks, “Belly-pinchers,” &c., &c., would have been handed over to the popular retribution of tar and feathers; or transported in double-quick time, with a few friendly kicks for luck, over the water, to the penal settlements; there to fraternize with fellows more kindred to their own atrocious natures, and experience what it is to have nothing a-day, and find themselves!

But the recreant desertion of one party, and the rancorous opposition of the other, denied you the gratification of perfecting reformatations so beneficial; yet, notwithstanding your inability, under such conflicting circumstances, to establish the liberation of your countrymen from misery, slavery, and an organized plan for the extermination of them and theirs—our gratitude, our praise, both are equally your due. For though defeated in your philanthropic endeavours to rescue your poorer brethren from the fangs of their ruthless destroyers, in the tune-words of the Quiritian lyrist, “*non militavisti sine gloriâ!*”—you have not legislated without renown; and that in a field more noble than the ensanguined plain of the warrior—because you, Sir, contended for the preservation of your species—he, the man of war, for their destruction: more renouncing than the author’s—for he only labours to amuse and instruct—while you strove



to clothe, to feed, to free. The reputation of both the foregoing may be questioned by partial historians and party prejudice—but yours\*—

“Glory like yours, should any dare gainsay,  
Humanity would rise and thunder “Nay!”

I am, Sir,

With feelings of the greatest admiration and respect,  
Your obedient servant, and cordial well-wisher,

August 22, 1837.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.†

## AN EXHORTATION TO PETITION,

ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND TO BESTIR THEMSELVES IN THE PRESENT CRISIS,‡ AND, BY CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS, TO THROW OFF THE IGNOMINIOUS YOKE OF THEIR DOWNING-STREET AND SOMERSET-HOUSE PERSECUTORS.

PETITION! PETITION! PETITION!

“Allons enfans de la patrie,  
Le jour du glorie est arrivé,  
Contre nous de la tyrannie.”—MARSEILLAISE.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,—The period is fast approaching when Mr. John Fielden, as he has nobly, generously volunteered, will bring your unparalleled wrongs and sufferings under the administration of the new order of pauper jurisprudence, before the House of Commons.

Such being the case, let me entreat you, collectively and individually, as you wish to burst your ignominious chains, to support, by many and numerously-signed petitions, that gentleman's humane endeavours in behalf of yourselves and families. Yes! now is the moment for action; now is the time, by attaching your signs-manual to anti-extermination petitions, boldly, yet constitutionally, to tell your slaughterers, the “base and bloody Whigs,” those brutal fatteners on your flesh, that, guilty of no crime, (unless poverty be one,) you will not tamely submit to be imprisoned, like robbers and murderers, in the unwholesome Bastille “Unions;” that, you will not, without a struggle, and a fierce struggle, too, forego your right, your undoubted right,—a right which even the beasts that perish are permitted to enjoy,—the right to breathe the airs of heaven; that you will not quietly suffer your wives, the fond, affectionate girls of former, better times, whom you took for better, for worse, to be your solace in sickness and in health, and, too, your pretty little ones, to be torn in ruthless violence, as the “Act” directs, from your arms; that you will not see your daughters, sisters, and wives, delivered over, an authorized prey to dishonour and violation, without making a desperate effort to protect their

\* It is comfortable to know that Mr. Walter's endeavours have not gone altogether without appreciation. The *Northern Liberator*, of Feb. 1838, reports, that the poor of Droxford Union, anxious to mark their sense of his services to them, determined to subscribe the humble sum of one penny each family, in order to purchase a testimonial, which they might present to Mr. Walter, as a proof of the sincerity of their feelings towards him. A richly-bound Bible was the appropriate testimonial chosen; and, adds the *Liberator*, on Monday last, a meeting was held at the school-house of Soberton parish, when the ceremony of presentation took place.

† This Letter originally appeared in the *Metropolitan Conservative Journal* of August 26, 1837.

‡ This was originally published in January, 1838, a few weeks prior to Mr. Fielden's Motion for the Repeal of the New Poor-Law, in the House. It is, however, equally appropriate to the present time, and to any, and all time, until the “accursed thing” be abolished with unanimous and national execration.



virtue, and revenge their wrong ; that, in continuation, it is your firm determination, in a country of plenty, where ample provision is periodically subscribed for your support,\* not to rot and die of hunger in the public streets and highways ; that it is equally your determination to contend that, after death, your bodies shall not shamefully be thrown, like dead vermin, into a hole, without the customary and Christian solemnities of the burial service, pall, bell, &c.

In fine, friends and fellow-countrymen, show your tyrants that, come what will, you will have liberty, free, unrestricted, constitutional liberty, liberty of religious worship, liberty of air and exercise, liberty to eat and drink, and liberty to greet and associate with those most familiar, most dear to you ; and that, henceforth, you will be treated like human beings, having souls in your bodies, and not as brutes ; and that you will, moreover, resist to the utmost of your power and pith, numerically and unanimously, all official attempts to establish the administration and jurisdiction of the infamous clauses and principles of the most infamous enactment that ever disgraced the statute-book of any kingdom.

For your own sakes, for the welfare and preservation of your country, and those most dear to you, do this, and don't, as you value your lives and liberties, let an opportunity like the present, an opportunity which, if now neglected, may never again occur, of emancipating yourselves, pass by unavailable ! Don't, I emphatically and warningly make repetition, don't, now a champion has stepped forward to do battle in your behalf, remain inert, while he is active, slow, while he is enthusiastic ; on the contrary, be up and be doing, and above all, allow not the specious and notoriously-interested "givings out" of the Whig-party ones and the Whig-prejudiced ones, whose emissaries, at the present crisis, will doubtless be dispatched and fee-ed from head-quarters, Downing-street and Somerset-house, to mislead and persuade you from prosecuting your just and constitutional endeavours to obtain the redress of your grievances.

It is true, these paid declaimers in favour of pauper starvation, demoralization, and universal destruction, with the deceit and mendacity of their original male ancestor, the first Whig, Satan, will essay every means to pervert the truth, and make even humanity, in their reports, appear designing agitation. Thus, they will proclaim to the inexperienced in "such perilous matters," that the "Union" houses of bondage, where death is officially dealt out by inches, are perfect palaces, in whose blessed interior the inmates spend half their time in quaffing brandy-punch, and the remainder, in discussing Strasburg pies, "neat as imported," or, in other words, as I myself was lately told by one of these said wholesale slaughter eulogists, "the poor were never so well fed and comfortable in their lives!!!!!!!!"†

But, allowing a heavy discount for the ready "invention of the enemy," is this the case ? is the verification of the term "better fed" to be established by the wretches' daily reception of a few superficial ounces and spoonsful of such abominable garbage as black, rotten bread and herring-bone water ? And is the substantive "comfort" generally elucidated in our dictionaries by iron-bedsteads, no fires, "linsey-woolsey" gowns, sail-cloth shirts, and Calcutta "black-hole" rooms, poisoned with the unhealthy effluvia of beings populated at the average of two to every square foot, the wretched victims, perchance, involuntarily voiding their fæces, (*vide* Mr. John Bowen's "*Bridgewater Treatises*,") or eaten up with filth and innumerable vermin (*vide* Mr. Samuel Roberts's "*Mary Wilden*").‡

\* Between seven millions and eight millions, according to M'Culloch.

† In refutation *vide* Union Diet-Tables.

‡ *Vide* Mr. Bowen's pamphlet on the Bridgewater cases of skilly murders, in 1837 and 1838, which took place in the Union workhouse of that town ; and Mr. Roberts's (of Sheffield,) account of Mary Wilden's infamous treatment in the Workop Union Bastile, and her horrible death.

But to proceed. Should their three-volume fictions, about the hospitality (?) \* of the Bastiles, fail (through your sad experience to the contrary !), to tempt you from the performance of the duty you owe to yourselves, incontinently, with the most crafty facility, they will try another tack, and blandly insinuate, that "much misconception and exaggeration of the cruelties of the New Poor-Law are abroad," "unprincipled agitators," "the lying press," "the 'few idle, lazy, dissolute villains' who oppose it," &c. ; and that the official authorities do not *always* sanction paupers to die of starvation in the streets, but, in some instances, still "offer them out-door relief!" † "still allow men, with families of seven children, *half-a-stone* of flour ('best seconds') a-week, and, they believe, without curses,—that is, if the applicants are *not* Tories!"

Remarkable benevolence! But, notwithstanding, friends and fellow-countrymen, be not beguiled by its recapitulation. It is true, out of fear of your indignation, and to serve political ends and purposes, in some places, the extreme rigour of the infamous measure in question, has not been exacted; but what then? Does that non-imposition speak in favour of the enactment? Does it not rather show that it is such a one, that even its officials, brutal as they have proved themselves to be, are ashamed of its innate barbarities, and dare not put them into operation? Besides, there is a deal of time-serving policy in this gratuitous and unlawful leniency; for, believe me, the present loose enforcement of the Malthusian system, in some districts, is cunningly devised in order to smooth your popular irritation, and divert from its objects, your *just* retribution. But once let that consummation be effected, once let the administration of the Somerset-house traitor Trinity be, through your apathy, firmly and universally established, and then where will be that leniency? then you and yours will have the New Poor-Law, in all its sanguinary atrocities and many horrors, heaped upon your crushed, powerless, and bleeding hearts!

Again, friends and fellow-countrymen, let me put you on your guard, not to give ear or consideration to the ministerial partisans, when, bent upon your destruction, and fearful of your power, they, with an assumption of carefulness for your interests and welfare, softly entreat you, "Be quiet, good people,—have patience, there's dears! and don't curse Lord John in Yorkshire, or throw rotten eggs and dead rats at the Commissioners in Wales, for her Majesty's Ministry intend doing something for you, and, indeed, have, at this very moment, a Committee up-stairs, always ready to listen to your complaints and grievances." *They* listen to your complaints and grievances! they do something for you! What! think you, they will disgorge their ill-gotten plunder, or, unpension and turn adrift the "flunky" crew who are wallowing in luxuries at your expense? luxuries bought with your despairful shrieks and cold death-agonies.‡ If you think they will, I can only say, you know very little of the utter heartlessness which has always characterized a Whig administration!

No, no; put not your trust in Whig protestations of redress, for when were they ever but basely forfeited? Believe me, 'tis by your own constitutional efforts, as petitioners, the battle of liberty must be fought; by your own exertions the victory of emancipation must be obtained; for—

\* *Vide* the descriptions of the Bastiles, Bastile Food, and Treatment, &c., in Part II. of this work.

† At *Hereford*, for instance, (of which anointed *city of the snobs*, Mr. E. B. Clive, father to one of the Assistant Poor-Law Commissioners, is *now* a member,) it is curious to observe, when the rumour of an approaching election is rife, how *tender-hearted-tenderly* all at once, as if by magic, the system of separation and no-out-door-relief works; but let the said rumour, like a shower of sleet, blow off, and again all is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" for the poor wretches in the "Union."

‡ The Whig Ministry well exhibit how much they care for the complaints of the people by the recent introduction of their Ten Years' Commissioners' Continuance Bill, that Bill which Mr. D'Israeli, in the House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1841, proclaimed to be "an exaggerated copy of the former Act."



“ Poor-Law bondmen, know ye not,  
Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow ? ”

Yes ! you must “ strike the blow ! ” and, oh ! my dear friends and fellow-countrymen, strike it now, and petition, everywhere petition, from your high places, from your low places, from your mountains, from your valleys, from your towns, from your villages ; and, from the Tower Hamlets to Plinlimmon’s hoary top, let no apathy, no party, no prejudice, damp the general and holy enthusiasm ; but, united in one powerful and organized band, boldly demand freedom, freedom from the despicable bondage of the “ lickspittle ” despots of Somerset-house and Downing-street !

Once more, and yet once more, friends and fellow-countrymen, I trumpet you to the glorious onset ; be up and be doing ; and in answering the Godlike call of Liberty, enthusiastically work out your own enfranchisement ! Think of your wives and little ones ; see ! with famished looks and breaking hearts, they urge you on ! Can I say anything further to induce you at the present crisis to be energetic ? Yes, one word—

“ Awake ! arise ! or be for ever fallen ! ”

I am, Friends and Fellow-countrymen,

Your sincere well-wisher,

January 3, 1838.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

## COPIES OF PETITIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE “ METROPOLITAN CONSERVATIVE JOURNAL.”\*

SIR,—Knowing and appreciating the interest that you and your numerous readers take in all matters connected with the pauper-extermination decree of the justly designated “ brutal and bloody ” Whigs, I beg to transmit, for insertion in your benevolent columns, the two following petitions for the repeal of that miscreant enactment. The first, from myself, was presented to the House of Commons on Thursday (the 21st), by Mr. Fielden,† the honourable member for Oldham ; and the other, which I have been solely instrumental in getting up at Hereford, and which, in less than a week, received almost a thousand signatures, will, early in February next, be presented by the gentleman already named.

I am, Sir,

Yours very truly,

Hereford, Dec. 26, 1837.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

(1.)

“ To the Commons of the United Kingdom, in Parliament assembled.

“ The Petition of GEORGE ROBERT WYTHEN BAXTER, of the City of Hereford, Gentleman,

“ Showeth,—That your Petitioner, with all respect, approaches your Honourable House.

\* The copies of these two petitions appeared in the above paper, December 30, 1837, and subsequently, in several London and Provincial papers, besides being printed as handbills.

† “ A petition from Mr. G. R. Wythen Baxter, of this city, praying for the total repeal of the New Poor-Law Amendment Act, was presented on Thursday, the 21st instant, to the House of Commons, by Mr. John Fielden, Member for Oldham. Mr. Baxter is also superintending another petition, which, we understand, has received a great many signatures, in this city, for the repeal of the New Poor-Laws.”—*Hereford County Press*, Dec. 30, 1837.



"That, in doing so, he is not actuated by motives of party or prejudice, but purely out of feelings of humanity and justice.

"That, his reason for so doing is, because your Petitioner has beheld, with sensible regret and anxiety, the extensive misery and utter destitution which pervade the old and pauper population of these realms, since the coming into operation of the new pauper institute—commonly called the New Poor-Law Amendment Act.

"That your Petitioner has also beheld, with much regret and anxiety, the alarming and numerically increased instances of viciousness and crime, which the introduction of the Act, aforesaid, has occasioned among the lower orders, and the frequent accidents of a revolting and an indecent nature, such as births, deaths, and starvations, in the open air and public streets, which have occurred since its administration as the law of the land.

"That, in continuation, your Petitioner has beheld, with equal regret and anxiety, not unmingled with apprehension, the dangerous seeds of discontent and insubordination which the administration of the Act aforesaid has sown in the hearts of the artisans and other labouring classes of these realms.

"That your Petitioner, in the foregoing, may not be suspected of a desire to create imaginary alarm, he most respectfully begs, in corroboration of what he has adduced, to call the attention of your Honourable House to the many recorded instances of popular opposition which the official attempts to establish the authority and operation of the Act aforesaid have uniformly met with; and, more especially, in Yorkshire,\* Berkshire, Wiltshire, and the Principality of Wales.

"That, your Petitioner, deeply interested in the peace, good order, and prosperity of this country, and highly apprehensive that the continual administration of the Act aforesaid, will grievously endanger the same peace, good order, and prosperity, most humbly beseecheth your Honourable House to take into consideration the propriety of repealing, or materially amending, the Act aforesaid; or, at least, its most obnoxious principles: such as the 'bastardy,' 'separation,' and 'no-out-door relief' clauses; each of which clauses, with all deference to the superior judgment of your Honourable House, your Petitioner opines to be unnecessarily severe, and in direct opposition to all justice, humanity, and the commands of God; and likely, if their administration be persisted in, to engender much national licentiousness and crime.

"That, in conclusion, your Petitioner humbly begs, that during such time as your Honourable House shall be deliberating on the subject of pauper jurisprudence, your Honourable House will be graciously pleased to order the suspension of the administration of the Act aforesaid.

"And your Petitioner will ever pray, &c."

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(2.)

"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom, in Parliament assembled.

"The humble Petition of the undersigned Citizens and Inhabitants of the City and Borough of Hereford,†

\* In Sheffield, at a large Anti-New Poor-Law Meeting, it was unanimously resolved, that whoever favoured the introduction of the New Poor-Law would be an enemy to the peace, prosperity, and safety of the town; at the same meeting sixteen thousand individuals signed a petition for its total repeal!

† The petition for the repeal or modification of the New Poor Laws, which, for some weeks previously, had been under the care of Mr. G. R. Wythen Baxter, of this city, and had been circulated for signature, was last week forwarded to John Fielden, Esq., M.P., for presentation to the House of Commons, who, on Monday night, (the 12th of Feb., 1838,) presented it with several others. We understand it was one of the most numerous-signed Parliamentary memorials that has ever emanated from the city of Hereford. Mr. Fielden, at the same time, presented similar petitions from Weston-under-Penyard, and from Linton, in this county, the first with 276, the latter with 221 signatures. The Hereford petition had 1,707 signatures.—*Hereford County Press*, Feb. 17, 1838.

"Showeth,—That your Petitioners, with all deference, approach your Honourable House.

"That your Petitioners are instigated to do so by the unparalleled misery and destitution which everywhere pervade the pauper population, particularly the old and helpless, of this kingdom, since the administration of the New Poor Amendment-Act.

"That your Petitioners view, with unqualified regret and anxiety, the alarming increase of crime and licentiousness, and the many instances of shocking catastrophe and indecent exposure, such as deaths, births, and starvations in the public streets and thoroughfares, which have transpired subsequently to the introduction of the enactment aforesaid.\*

"That your Petitioners also view, with sensible apprehension, the constant popular insurrections, in some instances attended with loss of life, which have uniformly resulted from the official attempts to establish the jurisdiction and operation of the enactment aforesaid.

"That your Petitioners, to prevent the occurrence of such alarming consequences, humbly entreat your Honourable House, to take into your *most earnest and immediate* consideration the necessity of totally repealing the enactment aforesaid; or, at least, its obnoxious principles—such as the 'bastardy,' 'separation,' 'no-out-door-relief,' 'union-imprisonment,' and 'prohibition to attend public worship' clauses; all and each of which clauses your Petitioners conscientiously conceive to be excessively arbitrary and cruel, and directly opposed to the received commands of Christianity, humanity, and justice; and likely, if their administration be continued, to cause much and grievous national confusion, rebellion, and wrong.†

"And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c."

(*Here follow the signatures.*)

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE "CARMARTHEN JOURNAL."

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"Petitioning for pity is most weak;‡

The sovereign people ought to demand justice."—DR. SOUTHEY'S WAT TYLER.

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"SIR,—As you were so courteous as to insert in the pages of your excellent

\* Destitute persons in danger of perishing in the streets of London, during the years 1837 and 1838, were, according to the *Companion to the Almanac for 1840*, and the *First Report of the Constabulary Force Commissioners*, seven hundred and seventy-four! Who, after this, can say that deaths in the public streets are fictitious circumstances!

† National confusion and rebellion the Act has caused already at *Birmingham, Newport, Newcastle, Llanidloes, Todmorden, Bradford, Sheffield*; and the wrong will be the un-English Rural Police which has been organized in some districts, and is to be in all, if the people will permit it. The Rural Police, after all, is only an additional clause of tyranny added to the New Poor-Law Act, "by way of rider," though the Whigs want to say it is to apprehend robbers and murderers, and suchlike, and has nothing to do with the administration of that enactment. But we know it is expressly called into being to "*bullet the beggars,*" and *sword the slaves*, who dare to resist the "orders, rules, and regulations" of the three Tyranni of Somerset-house, be those "rules and regulations" to put "*Marcus*" or *Martial Law* into operation. Speaking on this subject, that "right good un," the *Suffolk Juror*, says, "I am desired to keep the Poor-Law and Constabulary distinct and separate in future, like the cockney's milk, 'Give me the milk and the water separate, and let me mix for myself.' I wish the Poor-Law and the Police Force would prove as harmless as milk and water: they are more like fire and brimstone; at all events, one is *famine*; the other is intended to be the *sword*!" . . . . "A Poor-Law to drive people mad—a Police Force to keep them in starvation!"

‡ "Most weak" indeed! Sir George Sinclair, in a speech delivered in Parliament on the 22nd of May, 1840, and since, I believe, published in a pamphlet, has described the fate the



paper, a former anti-new-poor-petition from Hereford, I now beg to transmit for publication in your columns, a copy of one of which, in consequence of the *indignation* excited at Hereford by the *little regard* awarded the honourable Member for Oldham's motion of the 20th ult., has been forwarded from G. R. Wythen Baxter, Esq., the chairman of the previous petition, to Mr. Fielden, to be presented to the House of Commons.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"Hereford, Feb. 26, 1838.

"NO BASTILES!"

"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom, in Parliament Assembled.

"The humble Petition of GEORGE ROBERT WYTHEN BAXTER, chairman of the Petition for the repeal of the New Poor Amendment-Act, signed by 1,707 of the Inhabitants and Citizens, which was lately presented from the city of Hereford,

"Showeth,—That your Petitioner, as stated above, was recently a respectful supplicant, in conjunction with 1,707 of his fellow-citizens, for the repeal of the New Poor Amendment-Act.

"That he again craves permission to approach your Honourable House.

"That your Petitioner now does so in order that, as the representative of his fellow-citizens, he may express their *deep regret and concern, not unmingled with astonishment*, that your Honourable House should so *slightly* have treated the late humane and patriotic motion for the repeal of the New Poor Amendment-Act; and not given it (the said humane and patriotic motion) the consideration which they, in unity with the majority of their countrymen,\* conceive it so imperatively deserved.

"That your Petitioner, judging from the paucity of votes recorded in favour of the aforesaid humane and patriotic motion, is fearful that the majority of the members of your Honourable House, are not sufficiently aware how *vital*ly the peace, prosperity, morality, and religion of these realms, depend upon the repeal of the New Poor Amendment-Act; or sufficiently acquainted with the unparalleled and revolting cruelties authorized and inflicted under the same: in short, your Petitioner is fearful, that many of the members of your Honourable House have not seriously contemplated the consequential rebellion, insubordination, and increase of every species of crime and licentiousness, which *must* succeed the continued administration of a statute so *diametrically* opposed to the commands of the Almighty, as the New Poor Amendment-Act.

"That your Petitioner, under this conviction, humbly calls the attention of your Honourable House to the same, and begs that your Honourable House will incontinently proceed to deliberate on the necessity—the *urgent necessity*—of abolishing the Act complained of by your Petitioner.

"That, in conclusion, your Petitioner begs respectfully, yet *firmly*, to state, that should your Honourable House *not* take some immediate steps to repeal,

people's petitions meet from their representatives to a truism. He says:—"From whence are they (the people) to hope for assistance? To transmit their complaints to this House is an empty ceremony and a vain delusion; as well might they address themselves to the Congress at Washington, to the Chambers of Deputies at Paris, or to the Cortes assembled at Madrid. Their petitions are huddled together like so much rubbish, and consigned in silence to the leathern sepulchre of oblivion; if that, indeed, can be said to be forgotten which scarcely attracted the notice of a single moment. Should any rash philanthropist venture to utter a single sentence in their behalf, how many patriotic economists of the public time would grudge the application of even a few minutes to such a theme!"

\* To exhibit how little esteemed the New Poor-Law is by all, saving its immediate flunkies, in the session of 1839 but *five petitions* were presented in its favour, and those only signed by *eighty-seven individuals*, (most probably all of them officials,) while, during the same session, 98 memorials for amendment and alteration, bearing 5,771 signatures, and eleven for total repeal, with 4,466 signatures, were presented on the opposite side, and this when the generality of the people had begun to consider petitions as "most weak!"



or materially modify, the Act before mentioned, your Petitioner, in conjunction with many others, much as he will regret the alternative, *will be under the necessity of refusing to pay any longer Poor's-rates, levelled under the authority of such an unconstitutional and illegal enactment as the New Poor Amendment-Act.\**

“And your Petitioner will ever pray.”

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“To the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament now assembled.

“The humble Petition of GEORGE ROBERT WYTHEN BAXTER, of the City of Hereford, Gentleman,†

“Showeth,—That your Petitioner, with feelings of the greatest respect, approaches, as a suppliant, your Lordships’ august assembly.

“That your Petitioner’s reason for so doing, is, because in the present juncture of pauper suffering and distress, he, in common with all humane and well-disposed persons, wishes to express to your Lordships the painful regret and heart-felt commiseration with which he views the unnecessary‡ and inhuman oppression, which the pauper population (particularly the old, the helpless, and females of an unfortunate class), have endured, and still are enduring, under the administration of the recently-instituted enactment, commonly called the New Poor Amendment-Act.

“That, justly attributing these unparalleled grievances, which his poorer countrymen everywhere complain of, to the obnoxious and unconstitutional principles of the enactment beforementioned; and regarding, with sincere apprehension and alarm, the numerically increased instances of every species of crime and licentiousness, and more particularly of *murders, suicides, infanticides,§ feticides*, incendiarisms, and robberies in the streets and highways; not to mention the many authenticated examples of a revolting and indecent nature: such as Deaths, Births, and Starvations, in the open air and public thoroughfares, which have occurred since the introduction of the New Poor-Law, your Petitioner most earnestly implores your Lordships, without loss of time, or further expenditure of pauper lives, to take into your most serious and immediate consideration the necessity of repealing the Act aforesaid.

\* It would appear from the following analect, that the collection of rates, under the new admirable system, *which works so well*, is not the *easiest* matter in the world. “At the last meeting of the Nottingham Board of Guardians it was declared almost impossible to collect the poor-rates; out of the last rate of £12,000, £5,000 is uncollected.”—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Oct. 24, 1840.—At Hereford, too (*the city of the snobs*), there never is a rate that can be got in for the benefit of the poor—Commissioners, without having recourse to the *physical force* of summoning to compel payment. But still it is but fair to add here, that the inhabitants of Hereford are not *very famous* for settling their accounts: the Gregarach’s “good old rule” and “simple plan” agree more with their manner of living; and it is seldom but that they are as full of *tick* as a bed, a watchmaker’s shop, or a flock of sheep.

† “A petition from Mr. G. R. Wythen Baxter, of this city, praying for the repeal of the New Poor-Law, was presented to the House of Lords by Earl Stanhope, on Thursday, the 8th inst.”—*Hereford County Press*, March 17, 1838.

‡ Certainly unnecessary, as regards the thinning of the pauper population of this kingdom, when we find by the Registrar-General’s Report for 1839, that in that year 11,727 died violent deaths (the greater number from accidents with machinery) in England; and when we see related in the Poor-Law Commissioners’ Report for 1837, that no fewer than 2,000 labourers emigrated from one county (Suffolk) in the space of twelve months. Surely such periodical occurrences, together with the exterminatory practices of the “Act,” will drain our “country’s pride” *too dry!*

§ For instance, among *too many others*, the poor girls, Byrom and Jones, at the Chester Assizes, 1838, and Celia Tippins, at Gloucester. The unfortunate creatures, Byrom and Jones, who were rescued by petitions from an infamous death, have in their persons had the torture revived in England, being sentenced to five years’ imprisonment, with hard labour, a quarter of each year to be solitary confinement, and then transportation for life. So much for Whig mercy!

“That your Petitioner thus humbly entreats your Lordships to repeal, without qualification, the Act aforesaid, because your Petitioner, with becoming submission to the superior judgment and known benevolence of your Lordships’ illustrious House, conscientiously believes its principles, more especially, those which authorise the unconstitutional existence of the ‘central board;’ the illegality of separating man and wife, parent and child; the injustice of making the acceptance of a prison, with worse than prison fare and prison discipline, the test of destitution and poverty to be relieved; the cruelty towards unfortunate women as enacted in the Bastardy Clauses; the intolerance of prohibiting the inmates of the ‘union’ workhouses from attending public worship;\* and the injuriousness practised towards the rate-payers in expending their charitable contributions in salaries for the numerous officials created under the existing Act, to be not only in the highest degree unconstitutional and illegal, but, at the same time, directly opposed to the written statutes of the Almighty, and likely, if their administration be continued, to cause in these realms frequent and extensive occurrences of rebellion, licentiousness, and crime.

“Your Petitioner, therefore, to avoid the grievous national misfortune which must inevitably result from the continued administration of the New Poor Amendment-Act, humbly prays, that your Lordships will, in your wisdom, incontinently proceed to deliberate on the propriety of repealing the enactment complained of by your Petitioner, who will ever pray,” &c., &c., &c.

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### THE BASTARDY CLAUSE.

A FEW SENTENCES ADDRESSED TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL, ON HIS ADVOCACY OF THAT “WISE ENACTMENT” (AS MR. JOSEPH HUME † DESIGNATED IT IN THE DEBATE OF NOV. 27, 1837) FOR THE PROMOTION OF FEMALE PROSTITUTION.

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SEB.—“Bate, I beseech you, widow Dido.”

ANT.—“O, widow Dido; ay, Widow Dido.”—TEMPEST, Act II. s. 1.

ANGELO—“The tempter, or the tempted, who sins most? Ha!

Not she; nor doth she tempt.”—MEASURE FOR MEASURE, Act II. s. 1.

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MY LORD,—The days of chivalry, said one every way calculated to have been its brightest ornament, are past! and your Lordship, and your ministerial companions, seem to suppose that the days of humanity are also waning to a close; or, at least, have essayed, by the introduction of your pauper-agony law, to produce and expedite their conclusion.

\* It appears to be the high aim of the Commissioners not only to prevent the poor from going to church, but, it would seem, by the pitiful salaries given to Union chaplains, they desire to discourage, as much as possible, the reception of any religious instruction, even in the Bastiles. It is curious to contrast the salaries of the Commissioners and the Chaplains. The yearly stipends of all the Chaplains of the Metropolitan Union workhouses are as follows:—West Ham Union workhouse, £120; Brentford, £80; St. George-in-the-East, £50; Hackney, £40; Hendon, £73 10s.; Holborn, £50; Kensington Union,—Chelsea workhouse, £40; Kensington workhouse, £40; Hammersmith, £30; Fulham, £30; City of London Union, three Chaplains, two at £150 each, and one at £100; St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields, £100; East London, £100; West London, £100; Poplar, £60; Strand, £90; Stepney Union,—Limehouse, £30; Mile-end, £30; Ratcliffe, £30; Wapping, £30; Uxbridge, £50; Whitechapel, £70. Thus it will be seen that the entire sum paid for the services of twenty-four clergymen does not exceed £1,493 10s. a-year, not so much as the pay of one Poor-Law Commissioner! And their provision for the bodies of the paupers is as scanty and scandalous as their provision for their souls; for, in many instances, Nottingham among the number, where, previously to the introduction of the “Act,” three parishes had three medical attendants, they have now only *one*!!!

† Joey’s nephew is, or was, an Assistant-Commissioner, viz., Mr. James Hume.



And here, in wonder and amazement, let me ask your Lordship, how comes it to pass that you, not nursed (as some of your supporters, in and out the House, may have been, for aught I know\*) in "hideous usages and rights accursed," but in the sleek abandonment of Woburn Abbey;—not brought up in youthhood, a desperate "tall nothing," to follow hounds and hares, but a Petrarchlike being, slight, small, and sickly, who doted upon flowers, and sang contributory "ladye's" love in the "Keepsake" Annual;† how comes it to pass, I reiterate, that one so sensible of soft impeachments—how is it that your Lordship, above all your compeers—you who so often have caused the widow's‡ heart to leap with joy—you, the translator of "Don Carlos," and the author of the Reform (bubble) Russell's Purge, could be one of the original creators, and are one of the present advocates of a legislative enactment, containing such a diabolical principle as the Bastardy Clause?

But I don't believe your Lordship ever was concerned in the concoction of this revolting enactment, much less the advocate thereof. No, no; the nation has been under an hallucination all this while—your Lordship must have a "double," a "counter-presentment," or something of the sort. Yes, indubitably, there are two Lords John Russell in the field! and one is the proprietor of the New Poor-Bill and its Bastardy Clause; and the other, of "Don Carlos," the "Purge," and the "widow." In a word, it is my firm persuasion (for how am I otherwise to account for such a discrepancy?) that some wag, or games-making fellow, has unwarrantably assumed your Lordship's name and individuality, and, in the assumption and presumption thereof, dressed in his "little brief authority," has played these "tricks" (*vide* the principles of the New Poor-Law, particularly the base and Bastardy Clause) before "high Heaven," and made the "angels weep"—literally, earthly angels weep, viz., those unfortunate, fair, frail ones, who, since the new law's introduction, in gradual shameful agonies, have sunk victims to its horrid cruelties in the public streets!

But not to digress: it is to that wag, or games-making fellow, and not to your real Lordship, who, very consistently, some years ago was all for liberty, the people, the abolition of sinecures and purification of the pension-list! that this letter is addressed. I think proper to make this announcement, lest in the frequent mention of your Lordship's name, which must necessarily occur throughout this epistola, your Lordship might imagine I intend a personal attack on yourself, and not on the impudent pretender who, doubtless, supposing your Lordship to be closely engaged in your charming avocation, as formerly, of writing for the pages of Mr. Ackerman's annuals, has so unlawfully taken upon him the patronymic of the illustrious house of Russell, and, under that imposing designation, smuggled himself into place and power.

Having, to avoid the implication of being satirical on any *legitimate* connexion of the Duke of Bedford, made this imperative declaration, I shall now proceed to shame your Lordship (of course, I mean the graceless impostor before mentioned) out of your inhumanity, and, if possible, get you to arrest the administration of a measure rife with such infamous principles, as the separation, no relief, and, most abhorrent of all, that miscreant stab at female honour and protection, the Bastardy Clause! But without, in the present instance, dilating on the barbarities of the two former, I shall at once discuss the latter, whose exhibitions of injustice, immorality, and incitement to crime and cruelty, are, alas! over-abundantly sufficient for the purpose; and in doing so, it is my intention to divide the objections to its retention, as the law of the land, into four parts: viz., its injustice, its unmanliness, the viciousness it is calculated to engender, and the consequences likely to accrue from its continuation.

\* Mr. Daniel O'Connell, for instance.

† "Little Finality" used, in *some sort*, to soil the *Annuals* with his sorrows and sentiments.

‡ It is well known Lord John wedded a widow for her £. s. d.; she has since departed, and he is now courting again! What a bold man! what an enterprising minister!



To commence with its injustice. And here let me inquire of your Lordship, what can be a greater, a more unparalleled and signal piece of injustice, than for the executive government of the country to establish a legislative statute, organized expressly for the extension of female immorality and prostitution, (which the Bastardy Clause to all intents and purposes is) and then, when the unhappy daughter of humble life and humbler circumstances, is, by that statute's *direct instrumentality*, given over an *authorized prey* to the seducer, for the members of the executive government aforesaid, to issue, through the medium of their detested and detestable commissioners, "orders" directing a shameful and innodest exposure of her frailty, and her ultimate destruction by starvation, with its many corresponsive horrors, in the public streets! and all because the poor deluded victim followed, as she was coerced to do, their (the Government's) "written instructions," and committed what those "written instructions" were mainly influential in driving her to! Yet such is one of the leading attributes, which so pre-eminently distinguish your much-lauded, mild, benevolent, and well-working New Poor-Law!

But to proceed: Women (particularly those of the lower orders, whom your Lordship, in co-partnership with Mr. Joseph Hume, and your Downing-street and Somerset-house companions have so *manfully* raised, and commissioned a flunky crusade to destroy), are naturally, and from circumstances, too open and unprotected against the arts of the deceiver and the villain; and consequently required no legislative enactment to facilitate their undoing. In verification of this assertion, look at the condition of females in humble life, brought up in severity and little enjoyment, they are too prone to give ear to the specious insinuations of those who are, perhaps, the only ones who, during the course of their cheerless lives, have treated them with kindness. This naturally begets love; and when a woman loves, as your Lordship from experience must be well aware, she never stops to think of consequences; but, confiding in the faith of her admirer, makes those sacrifices which, when too late, she has, poor thing! such cause, particularly under the administration of the New Poor-Law, to deplore!

But, good God! is she, for her confidence in the honour of our sex, and through our sex's abuse of that confidence, and disregard of that honour, to be ruthlessly subjected to all the horrors of a death by starvation? Surely the rules of society, strangely in this instance, called "civilized," which ostracise from association and reception, a woman when she deviates from the paths of propriety, inflict a sufficiently severe visitation on her criminality, without having recourse to an Act of Parliament to punish her degradation with a cruel, lingering, and ignominious death! Really, the policy which could dictate such a retribution on a poor, weak, soft, erring woman, is the policy of a fiend, and barbarously illustrates the common archaism of knocking a wretch down, and subsequently kicking the poor devil for falling! At any rate, however, if such chastisement is for the future to await the frailty of woman, in common justice, my Lord, let there be no distinction made between the unvirtuous lapses of the daughters of the rich and titled, and those of the poor and helpless; for, of course, it is the crime, not the poverty, of the offender, that such professors of morality, as you and Lord Viscount Melbourne, desire to punish.

Furthermore, to continue exemplifying the manifest injustices of this most abominable clause of a most abominable enactment, what, let me put it to your Lordship's manhood and sense of equity, can possibly be imagined more radically unjust than a law, which, not only permits, but sanctions the escape of the principal criminal and inciter to fornication, without the slightest mulct; while, at the same time, it unequally and injuriously compels the suffering and weaker vessel to bear all the shame, all the burden, and all the penalty, which is assuredly ignominy, and, under the present order of things, too frequently unmitigated starvation and death!

What, let me, in reiteration, ask your Lordship, were you not one of its creators and advocates, would you have thought of such injustice? and what would you have adjudged of the men who, *malgré* their being the abettors and supporters of this outrageous libel and attack on female purity, possessed the effrontery afterwards to continue to look, not only a woman, but, as her national advisers, their maiden sovereign in the face? Why, doubtless, your Lordship would have concluded, as I do, that they were unenviably gifted with the most indomitable copperas of countenance!

In extenuation of this injurious feature, it has been frequently adduced by your Lordship and other approvers of the demoralizing edict, that the entailing of the whole responsibility on the female, in cases of seduction and fornication, will operate as a species of moral checkstring on the woman; and that, when she is made aware what will be the certain termination of her deviations from the paths of virtue, it will influence her to be more cautious in giving way to frail propensities, and listening to lewd proposals. My Lord, I doubt its having such an effect; insomuch as I, with many others, having experience in such matters, consider it a difficult undertaking to attempt to legislate on natural feelings, for, as Horatius says, "When you essay to rout nature with a pitchfork, she will again and again return" (*Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret*). Yes, yes; believe me, my Lord, wise as you are in your generation, it will be some calendar time before you can make human passion and frailty subservient and amenable to an—Act of Parliament: woman will be woman still! even should a Home Secretary,\* albeit as sagacious as my Lord John Russell, endeavour to rule and regulate her whims and inclinations!

But supposing, for the sake of discussion, that the throwing the *onus probandi*," or whole responsibility, on the shoulders of the weaker criminal, should, in its practical administration, average an adequate return of moral improvement and utility, even then, the clause in question, if not injurious, is decidedly faulty, insomuch as the principle of salutary restraint, which it is said to contain, is indubitably only a check on the guilty passions of the abandoned females, who, under the old system, sometimes made a trade and livelihood of their illegitimate offspring; in short, on those who have previously been convicted of incontinency, but is not a moral protection to the young and innocent maidens of humble life! See you not a screw loose here, my Lord, in the vaunted perfectibility of your pet *Amendment-Act*? Surely the measure which legislates *only* for the guilty, and leaves the virtuous girl entirely bereft of legal redress and protection, an authorized prey to the first designing villain, (say a nephew or younger brother of one of the Commissioners), who shall feel inclined, during a vacant period, for amusement, to undertake her ruin, requires some reformation? I should opine even your Lordship, and your brother-disciples of the "*dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas*" school of diplomacy, will admit that.

Of the unmanliness of the Bastardy Clause. The miscreant cowardice of depriving the female sex of the protection of the laws, and making them, in their defenceless state, still more defenceless, not to adduce its legalising the exposure of their travail, in the open air, to the unhallowed gaze of the depraved and dissolute, is, I should think, sufficiently obvious to every one, save such interested folk as your Lordship, and your Lordship's immediate underlings. Well, to shame the shameless, is assuredly a most unprofitable speculation; nevertheless, were I a woman, with all deference be it spoken, after the conspiracy you have entered into to degrade the female sex, I would not be your Lordship's spouse for treble the receipts of your official salary, which, if the books of her Majesty's exchequer were consulted, would be found (pickings and stealings included) no "trifle or eightpenny matter!"

\* When this was first published, which was in the *Metropolitan Conservative Journal* of March 17, 1838, Lord John Russell "disfigured" the office of Home Secretary.



And now, to proceed to another antagonist part of this clause, *i. e.*, the premium it unblushingly extends to viciousness and crime. Formerly there were some restrictions; they were, to be sure, in some instances, inadequate to oppose vice; but still they were restrictions on the libertine's lustful speculations; as the subsequent affiliation and responsible support of the offspring of an illicit intercourse, afforded an intimidating prospective to the most hardened and inconsiderate villain; and doubtless, under the old and better system, faulty as that was, the fear of exposure to the wealthy Lothario, and the dread of pecuniary consequences to the poorer *roué*, operated in a great measure as salutary checks to the perpetration of amatory crime. But now, by this new "invention of the enemy," those obstructions have not only been entirely removed, but inducements and licences of impunity have been wilfully and wickedly added to excite and countenance the commission of profligacy. As for corroboration; during the administration of the former laws of bastardy and affiliation, a rake, whether in high or low life, was frequently obliged, in order to avoid these contingencies of his debauchery (*viz.*, the dread of exposure and fear of pecuniary responsibility, as above quoted) to "talk of a priest and marriage," and so far to repair the mischief he had previously committed, as to make an honest woman of his victim. That was as it should be; but now, the new ministry of things has exploded this commendable restitution of female character; and, to use a slang, but expressive phrase, the "man for the dimity," is chartered, without let, molestation, or apprehension of future results, to run riot in the destruction of innocence, and the satisfaction of his depraved inclinations; and doubtless as he does so, his heart overflowing with gratitude for this "boon to the female population," he exclaims to his lascivious companions, in Shakspearean off-hand: "Well, God be thanked for these 'Whig Ministers and Commissioners,' they offend none but the virtuous; I laud them, I praise them:" for now "'tis like if there come a hot June, and this 'New Poor-Law' hold, we shall buy maidenheads, as they buy hob-nails, by the hundred!"

Having discussed thus far, according to my original proposition laid down in the commencement of this letter, the injustice, the unmanliness, and incitement to licentiousness of the Bastardy Clause, I shall now, in conclusion, point out for your Lordship's instruction, the certain consequences which will result from its being continued as the law of these realms, and those consequences, awfully retributory as they will be, may be told by a few succinct strokes of the pen.

To begin, then, their recapitulation: frequent and numerically-increased instances of seduction of the most brutal and heartless nature, and of the after-fruits of those seductions: fœticides, infanticides, and suicides; in other words, the paving of our streets and thoroughfares with the mangled and deserted remains of the newborn babes, and the choking up of our canals and rivers with the bodies of their ill-fated mothers! And then come the minor, but not less deleterious, products of its continuance: namely, the demoralization of public morality which it will cause to both sexes, by the frequent indecent exposures attendant on the now too common spectacles (*vide* the public press) of woman giving birth to her offspring in the open streets; and the powerful addition it must make to the ranks of the sisters of infamy, who are already (thanks to our young sprigs of nobility) too numerous!

In fine, persist in the Bastardy Clause's retention,\* and the statue of the

\* It is to be persisted in;—a Coercion Commissioners' Continuance Bill for five years is to be passed, and a Rural Police is to bolster up, for ever and ever, this "boon to the female population;" and the members of that Police, being duly qualified, are to be instrumental in making the women, every *nine months*, amenable to its tender mercies! Yes, the Rural Police are expressly called upon duty to play into the Commissioners' hands: the former are to seduce and make vicious, and the latter are to starve and torture the victims of their congenial blue-devilish allies' arts and appetites. Alas! for England! alas! for poor English women! "To pass," as the "*Suffolk Juror*" says, "an Act of indemnity first, and then, to turn off a set of unprincipled vagabonds, under the title of '*paid protectors of property*,'"



Goddess of Unchastity will be publicly set up, and no virtuous woman will be exempt from the insults of the depraved and dissolute. And these deplorable prospects will be established, all because my Lord John Russell, and his cabinet associates, wished to exhibit their skill in law-making, and their obstinacy in refusing to open their eyes, ears, and hearts, to a conviction of their law's (the New Poor-Law's) heinousness,\* even though a whole desperate nation was continually proclaiming it to them.

Having now come to the conclusion of my strictures on the defects, the guilty, abominable defects of a clause, the most reprehensible, perhaps, a legislature ever produced,† I cannot lay down my pen, without announcing that it has never been my desire to discharge artillery on such a small insect as a fly; and I trust that in the foregoing communication, I have not unwittingly done so on your Lordship. Though, at the same time, I must say, when I see one advocating, admiring, and cruelly administering to bleeding nature, a measure rife with such clauses as the "Act," whose manifold injustices and barbarities, I have, for some years, in conjunction with my dear friend Oastler, attempted to expose to public execration, be that advocate and admirer high or low, lord or loon, he deserves, richly deserves, to be regarded with ineffable scorn and contempt by every virtuous woman, and profound detestation and abhorrence by every

amongst unprotected females! How often will the noted '*parole*' and '*countersign*' be the same that the gallant Packenham gave, when about to annihilate General Jackson and a handful of volunteers? '*Beauty*' and '*Booty*'—but these men were then useless! it was the English army that was annihilated. Would that these words may be just as useless in the contemplated Police Force of Great Britain! *Great Britain!* Oh, no! ye will not be *Great Britain!* ye will be *Little Britain* then!" "*Little Britain,*" quotha? England has been *Brutish Britain* ever since the passing of the *Reform New Poor-Law*, and will be *Burning and Bankrupt Britain* if two such pests as the New Poor-Law and the Rural Police-Law (the latter is only the *bastard* of the former) be retained a few years longer!

\* Next to the heinousness of the New Law was its being perfectly uncalled for to supersede the old one. A medical friend of mine, Sir James Eyre (who, by-the-by, rather likes to hear himself talk), some time ago, purposely came all the way from London to call upon me, and tell that "If the old system had been continued, all property would have been eaten up!" "Continue the administration of the New Poor-Law a few years longer, and there will be no property to be eaten up," was my reply. The following extract from a communication which I received, dated the 24th of October, 1840, from a Stamford friend of General Johnson, M.P., however, entirely destroys the property "eating up" propensities of the Old Law. My informant says, "The New Poor-Law was totally unnecessary in this part of the world (Lincolnshire) which is purely agricultural, *sine* cotton or any other manufactures, thank God for it! Under the Old Poor-Law, the poor-rates were decreasing rapidly, and the County Magistrates had dropped their meetings from once a fortnight to once a month; so that we had neither too much crime nor distress: as to the latter, you may say it was hardly known in this fertile and well-cultivated district, except amongst the drunken and idle. The poor, with very few exceptions, were also well attended to."

† Hear what "the King" says on the Bastardy clauses:—"They are base, cruel, and disgusting. To reason upon them is impossible. None but a lascivious coward could have contrived them. I never yet met with more than one person who approved of them, and he was an openly base and cowardly profligate. One of the most respectable magistrates of this Riding once told me, that they had disgraced our courts of law, and demoralized the fountain of justice. He said, 'Our Quarter-Sessions are now, by these clauses, turned into the most disgraceful uses; and, that no man, of moral principle, could sit to hear the exposures which were there made, and which are required by this law, without feeling the most complete horror and disgust.' On these clauses it is impossible to argue. The spirit which could tear away the only defence which the law afforded to unprotected female innocence, must be from beneath."—OASTLER'S "*Right of the Poor to Liberty and Life.*" Sadler, too, denouncing the "Preventive Check" on Population of Malthus, which "Preventive Check" is the groundwork of the present Bastardy Clauses, says (and well his words apply to the "boom") "Its public victims are known and numbered, amongst which the living are more to be pitied than the dead. It transforms the natural protectors of the sex into their betrayers, and, absolving the tempters, metes out wretchedness and ruin to the less guilty tempted; and the totally innocent (because infant) beings, who, but for its unhallowed interference, would have been surrounded with affection, and invested with dignity, it consigns to misery, and brands with indelible disgrace."—The *Law of Population*, vol. II., b. iii., chap. x., p. 160.

honourable man.\* Such, I believe, my Lord, is the prevailing opinion of nine-tenths of the inhabitants of this queendom, and most especially of,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient humble servant,

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

## HOW WAD YOU LIKE IT YOURSEL ?

A QUERY, "ANENT" THE NEW POOR-LAW, SUBMITTED TO THE "PREEVAT" CONSIDERATION OF DR. JOHN BLACK, EDITOR OF THE "MORNING CHRONICLE."

CLOWN.—"And I beseech you, look into Master Froth here."—MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

FALSTAFF.—"There is no more faith in thee than in a stewed prune; no more truth in thee than a drawn fox."—HENRY IV.

"Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee; thou art translated."—MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

MR. DANGLE—"Where's the *Morning Chronicle*?"

MRS. DANGLE.—Yes, that's your *Gazette*."—THE CRITIC, Act I., s. 1.

MOST ERUDITE SIR,—I conceive I am not very wrong in addressing you as presiding Editor, or mouthpiece, of that extremely twaddling speculation, the *Morning Chronicle*; insomuch as, conjointly with Lord Palmerston, who benevolently divides his time between your back parlour in the Strand, the curling irons, and the duties of his *Foreign* Secretariat, you are pretty well authenticated to be the premier immortal who regulates and commands all the *composing* matter of those spontaneous and marvellous literary *automata*, which, as *lead-en* articles, diurnally evaporate, like smoke, from the opposite side of Somerset-house.

Before, however, proceeding to "splice," as one of Nelson's "Agamemnons" would say, the "main brace," with you, and call in question your principles—especially those on the subject of pauper jurisprudence, which, no doubt, are regulated from the prompt-book of the Cabinet, and for the promulgation of which, you, of course, pocket the "twine"—I must publicly affirm, that, *malgré* you are the first flute on the neat establishment of that *gloria di Cockagna*, the *Morning Chronicle*, and bosom friend and adviser of the present Administration, I do not feel the least awe, or sensation of what is characteristically called *all-over-ish-ness*, in approaching you with this address; neither do I, in the minutest degree, dread the future retribution of your grey goose quill, or

\* I am glad to perceive that I stand not alone in this opinion of the advocates of the New Poor-Law, for I find Mr. Thomas Clutton Salt, in the Birmingham Town Council, Dec. 1, 1840 (when it was unanimously agreed by the councilmen, with the exception of three or four Whig rough-riders, that the introduction of the Act in that town should be resisted,) declaring that "men must be devoid of all sense of degradation, if they could for one moment stand up to vindicate and support such an atrocious and disgraceful measure!" And isn't it an "atrocious and disgraceful measure?" Look here, Messrs. Hume, Grantley Berkeley, and Co., and reply:—

NORTHAMPTON, Jan. 17, 1841.—A traveller and his wife, *in pregnancy*, and in great distress, applied for relief to a Relieving Officer of a parish near Northampton, on Saturday night last, and after urging their suit for a considerable time without effect, the relentless functionary closed his door against the unhappy couple, leaving them unprotected, houseless, and penniless, to the mercy of the pelting snow-storm. After remaining some time, the poor woman was seized with the pains of labour. Application was renewed, her state made known, but all to no avail—no assistance was afforded, and the miserable woman actually became a mother, while standing in the keen, biting, pitiless storm of Saturday night last, close before the door of this official! The man snatched the child from off the snow, and ran with it towards the Union workhouse. From his agitation and excitement, he actually let the poor little innocent fall twice, ere he reached that almost last resource of human wo.—*Leicester Chronicle*.



fear that its application will produce any sensible alteration in the organism of my customary equanimity. Therefore, if you please, "Lay on, Macduff."

Having settled this necessary preliminary, now suppose, Mr. John Black, to punish your hard heart and callousness for the sufferings of others, some magician, wizard, devil, goblin, or demon, regardless of your *nice fence* with the late M.P. for Bath,\* and totally oblivious of your stupendous eloquence, which, by-the-by, is not very palpable to the ears and eyes of your readers—but then, as my agreeable friend, Plautus, says, "*sæpe summa ingenia in occulto latent*," which may be your case—suppose, I reiterate, some descendant of Medea or her aunt Circe, or such dealers in spirits, should incontinently—say the morning you read this—after having gone through the enchanting proems of muttering, singing, and the burning of "all unhallowed and odious things," including copies of those numbers of your paper in which a favourable eruption of scurrility has taken place, metamorphose your "situate and being," so that, all at once, instead of finding yourself first stick in the establishment of the *Morning Chronicle*, you, like Bottom, behold yourself "translated," not with an "ass's head," for that, in your case, would be a superfluous addition, but into a poor and respectable man—a novel metamorphosis for you!

But to proceed. In your new character as poor Jack Smith, or Bill Thompson (I presume I may, like Byron, make free with those cognisances), you have a wife and family of children; numerically, not less than six, nor exceeding sixteen. These children of yours, are, as is generally the case, very peckish; and are not infrequently crying out for bread, meat, clothes, fire, and other articles of alimentary and vestimental advantage. Well, you wouldn't mind their crying—even a sovereign's "kids" cry sometimes†—if it were not for the awkward circumstance, which is not very likely to stop their mouths, that you have nothing to give them; nor,—as to work and beg you are not allowed—and to steal, you would not allow yourself—do you perceive any very flattering prospect of obtaining any? In this dilemma, as a man of natural feelings, and having formerly paid "rates" yourself, you make application to the "Board" for assistance; and they, in their generally agreeable manner, receiving you with the greatest politeness, and the greatest given number of curses that can, with safety and decorum, be launched from the mouth of a "Guardian," dismiss you empty away, to rob, murder, or drown yourself; in brief, all or either, as you feel inclined.

However, you have no great *penchant*, I presume, to indemnify yourself by such reprisals, and therefore again make application to those "hearts of oak," the flunkies of the Commissioners; and, at last, are allowed to be relieved by undergoing that skilful representaton of death—separation from your wife and family.

"And are your wife and children taken care of the while?"

Why, not exactly; "but they must not starve," says a considerate, generous old gentleman, in a snuff-coloured coat and drab continuations, whom you before saw at the "Board;" "at least one of them must not," meaning your eldest daughter, the *beauty* of the family.

In continuation, that humane old gentleman provides for *her*; and so he does, and makes her, for about three weeks, more or less, to all intents and purposes, his wife, with the inconsiderable omission, however, of the *ring* and *prayer* generally used by old fashioned folk on those occasions.

Notwithstanding, however, all these little tender assiduities on the part of

\* Some time ago, Black and *white* Roebuck, then M.P. for Bath, fronted and popped at one another, but no *harm* was done! They do say the "flutes" used on that occasion were charged with powder only, or, if with lead at all, *white* lead.

† Ay, that they do, for Jones, the lad who was found concealed in the Queen's dressing-room during her Majesty's confinement, declared he heard the Princess Royal "squall!" There's for you!



your official friend towards your daughter; the salubrity of your apartment, so thoroughly aired and constantly cleansed and washed out with rain water; the liberality of your treatment in not having been *importunately* solicited to give your bones, *before your death*, to manure the "Master's" kitchen-garden; the bread imbued with more than Roman fortitude; the meat, so very fine, that you could scarcely see any of it; and the broth, which, spite of your wishes to the contrary, and the tenacity of the would-be residuary resin,\* frequently *left you, the moment* it was swallowed, to mix with its original dust on the floor;† in process of time (for some people don't know when they are well off) you, a true descendant of Adam, ask permission to leave your earthly paradise. It is, with a further donation of the *cursor*y remarks already alluded to, graciously acceded, and you once more behold the sky as a whole counterpane, and not in patchwork, as when seen through the roof of the before-eulogized Eden. You direct your steps, feeling, of course, a desire to see your wife and children, to your native village; and as you draw near your former home—a poor cottage to be sure, but still your home—beggar and slave as you are, your heart is awakened to the beauty of Byron's sentiment:—

"'Tis sweet to know an eye will mark  
Your coming, and look brighter when you come!"

You lift the latch—a stranger face appears; impatient, you ask for your wife, and are told, with the most astonishing composure, that "*she has been dead these six weeks*,"‡ having been mercifully *allowed* to end her misfortunes by expiring on the step of someone's door, in some street in London; suppose we say, for the sake of accurate illustration, on the free stones of your office in the Strand. But to progress. Naturally you feel a damp strike upon the region of your visual organs at the brevity of this intelligence; and the observer, as naturally, expresses astonishment and disgust at the exhibition thereof. What right has a pauper, without a penny, to cry? Then, in a broken voice, as Medea says (don't be afraid, I am only going to give the *translation*), you mutter, in exculpation, "It is nothing, I was thinking of my children."

"Your children! Lord bless the man! they are gone I don't know where. Your eldest daughter (the good-looking one, I mean, with light hair) has been a girl on the town for some time; one of your sons was transported, at the last spring assizes, for stealing a loaf of bread; and your other boy and girl, because they would not steal too, have been separated from each other by 'order of the Board,' and sentenced to hard labour in the factories at Manchester, Birmingham, or Stafford, but I don't know which! Get away with you!" \* \* \* \* \*

Now, Mr. Black, don't look glum, but simply tell me "How wad you like this yoursel?" Driven into a corner, as the saying is, "you wadna like it at a'," you answer. Then how, calling yourself a Christian, as I presume you do, can you dare to advocate§ a measure which entails all this, ay, and more than all

\* For an explanation of the *resin-diet* system adopted in most *well-regulated* Union work-houses, *vide* an excerpt from one of the Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens's sermons, inserted in Part II. of this work—article, "*Bastile Treatment and Tyranny*."

† *Vide* Mr. Bowen's (of Bridgewater) Treatise on the skilly used in the Bridgewater Union, which riddled the insides out of more than seventy paupers in a few weeks or so.

‡ A fact related sometime ago in the newspapers, and which, *I know*, has happened, since the introduction of the New Poor-Law, too often, oftener than the public has been made acquainted with. Secrecy and murder are first cousins, you know, in these matters.

§ And that you do, your master's master, Daniel O'Connell, will authenticate. He says, "The *Morning Chronicle* will spare two columns for a Poor-Law Commissioner at any time!" There is residing within a short distance of Hereford a sort of semi-Whig Conservative baronet of the name of S—, who has made himself very illustrious by invariably dragging in by the tail, when his health is proposed at any public or pot-house dinner:—"Gentlemen, if you wish to see *Lady S—*, she is *always* to be found in the cottages of the poor!" In like manner, if you should desire to discover the original spawning-place of a

this, on the heads and hearts of the poor and helpless? Pausing for your reply,

I am, erudite Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Oct. 28, 1837.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

## WHAT WILL BE THE END OF IT?

A FEW WORDS ADDRESSED TO THE BRITISH NATION, DEPRECATING THEIR EXTREME APATHY IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE NEW POOR AMENDMENT-ACT.

"You take things coolly, Sir, said Juan."—BYRON'S DON JUAN.

"Let its cruelties continue, and grow like weeds:

And I can only say—"Look to your title-deeds!"—BAXTER'S DON JUAN.

"The New Poor Amendment-Act; or, what will be the end of it?" This is a question of vital importance, involving, as it does, or as it *ultimately* will do, in its consequences, the interests, prosperity, and welfare of this mighty monarchy; a question which it would have been well for the majority of the House of Lords to have bethought themselves of, before they so negligently, so unpardonably allowed the third reading of the infamous slaughter edict to pass their house, when they had the option of refusal in their power; a question, which it was equally incumbent on the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel to have taken into serious account previous to their chronicling, as a text-word to the "bloody Whigs," their assent and laudation of a measure, calculated by the flagitious injustice and inhuman cruelty of its principles, to entail the most revolting, alarming, and mischievous results; a question which, collectively speaking, it behoveth, *malgré* their intense and almost universal disregard on the subject, all ranks, the Court, the Ministry, (whether the present, or the diplomacy that is to succeed it,) the Lords, the Commons, the Landholders, and the Fundholders, deliberately, earnestly, and humanely to consider, and that in time! except, indeed, collectively or individually, they are prepared to take the consequences,—the consequences of their apathy.

But to put a question equally responsible with the former: Are they prepared to take those consequences? the dreadful consequences likely to result from the continuance of the New Poor-Law Bill as the law of the land? Are the Ministry, the framers of the atrocity, so prepared? Are their flunky eulogists, the one idea-ed *Morning Chronicle* and *Globe*? Are the supporters of all its horrors? Are the fiendlike Commissioners, and all their attendant underlings of corruption? Are the upper, are the middle classes? In continuation of my interrogatory, and more to individualize,—Are the heroes of Regent-street and the Parks, the silver-forked oligarchy of indescribables, the Grantley Berkeleys and Lytton Bulwers, who flirt with their *pâtés* and *fricandeaux* with all the ardency of a first passion, and meditate on the tie of a neck-scarf for a fortnight? those who have bled at Waterloo and at Crockford's? the owners of the "stately homes of England," encircled by the "tall, ancestral trees;" and the dwellers in the less ambitious, but more comfortable messuages and tenements? the capitalists, the manufacturers, those whose fires and blast-furnaces, like Bailey's and Crayshaw's, in Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire, "burn pale and dreadful?" the trades; the grand compounder of drugs; the

Poor-Law Commissioner's lie about the *prodigious saving and contentment under the "Act,"* it is *always* to be found in the office of the *Morning Chronicle*, which office is quite convenient to Somerset-house, as Dr. Pye Smith and his brother-in-law, Edward Baines, Esq., M.P., can certify.



liver by his lights, the chandler; the mercer, who handles his ribbons behind the counter, and the coachman who handles his behind his horses; the tailor, the bookseller, the grocer, &c.; are these prepared to make mouths at coming events, at the terrible hereafter of the workings of the New Poor-Laws?

If not, it is full time they should, one and all, either arrive at some preparatory conclusion of that sort, or, heart and hand, by their unqualified and active opposition to the Union, bastardy, separation, and no-relief barbarities, destroy the possibility of future and more dreadful consequences, that is, if they have any, the least regard for their several safety, their several interests, and native country. But, peradventure, (as I am afraid is the case,) puffed up with their respective prosperity, and rendered callous and incredulous by success, like Acres, they reassure themselves (for the world is ever more susceptible of fear than pity,) that there is not such "very, very, very great danger" after all in the operation of the "new Act:" in a word, that the reformed or deformed order of pauper jurisprudence touches not them, but is merely an affair of honour, or, more properly, dishonour, between those men of large pensions and little praise, the Commissioners, and the beggarmen and strollers; and even if there should be peril in the distance, the produce of the slaughtering, demoralizing edict, as some of the prints say, though they do not credit it, at least to the extent expressed, for

"Newspapers and books, nowadays,  
Are filled up with lies, facts, and scraps;  
The proverb is true, that delays  
Are dangerous—but more t'other perhaps."

So, in verification of the advice contained in the above madrigal, and wrapped up in the counterpane of their fictitious security and nonconcern, they deem it most expedient to sit still by their parlour fires blazing bright, chat, read the new novels, and leave all to time and events, never taking into consideration that the while their poorer brethren are undergoing, according as the "Act" directs, deprivations and coercions seven times inhuman, and shedding, under its infliction thereof, tears seven times salt!

This is the too common and mistaken, I may say, selfish and heartless policy of many at the present moment, who, too apathetic to think, too careless to calculate, believe, because there is at present a calm, (for they care not for the actual sufferings of the poor, but only for the probable retribution which may accrue from those sufferings,) that the storm prophesied, as the inevitable results of the working of the new pauper injustice enactment, will blow off! But, good God! can they, for a moment, cherish the unnatural idea, that because the ground-down and agonized artisans and peasantry of England are for the present apparently quiescent, nobly quiescent, under the injurious cruelties and heartless barbarities of their persecutors,—can they, I reiterate, lay the flattering unction to their souls, that the horribly-entreated poor will always, will long remain the "pieces of still life," so faint, so spiritless, as they appear now? No! no! the principles of the New Poor-Law, it is true, have, indeed, degraded them and theirs, have done everything to make them criminal, mean, and low; but if they patiently submitted to such fiendlike cruelty and oppression, that, (their doing so) as our Milton sings,—

"———— That were low indeed!  
That were an ignominy and shame beneath  
The downfall!"—

But there is, I trust, no danger of such a stain on the British character; the people of England,—the noble, generous, and enthusiastic peasantry of England,—her hard-hitting and high-resolved artisans, are not arrived at such a slavish pitch of degradation as that, however degraded the devices of the Broughamite and Malthusian compact may, if successful, make them. But to proceed. Is it possible that any, the inhabitants of this isle, born within the pale zone of its



white, haughty, unconquerable cliffs, and cognizant of British characteristics, and knowing Britons' unqualified hatred of every species of oppression, can, for an instant, suppose, dare suppose, that they, the fathers, brothers, and sons of the warrior braves, who bled with Nelson and fought at Waterloo, could, or will grovel submission to the ineffable, the reptile degradation of being starved and massacred, insulted and sacrificed, their wives and daughters debauched, and themselves dragged, like felons, to unwholesome dungeons, by the fiendish fiat and unconstitutional "written orders" of a handful of low-born ruffians and miscreant underlings?

If any are so degenerated as to entertain such a pitiful opinion of their poorer countrymen, but still their countrymen, it is very well. And if any are so simple as to imagine that a sharp invective or Philippic against Commissioners and their flunky despicables, will be the most strenuous opposition offered to the workings of the New Poor-Law, it is also well; but, at the same time, it shows that they are lamentably ignorant of causes and effects; in short, in their consideration of the New Amendment-Act, have never, in the words of my thesis, asked themselves, "*What will be the end of it?*"

Should such be the case, as I believe it is, judging from the apathy which almost universally prevails among the upper and middle classes on the subject, it is high time that the rank and rich inhabitants of this monarchy should look about them, and better still if they could borrow (as they appear short-sighted,) some wizard's telescope, (a sensible man's pair of eyes would do,) and look before them; or, if that is too much trouble, suppose they employ some one as a sort of deputy-usher of the future's black rod, to take a speculation for them, and that before the "crack of doom" becomes too near, too inevitable!

To be brief: have the inhabitants of this queendom any objection to one (say the author of this present paper, and the ones which accompany it,) howbeit rather versed in the principles and probable consequences of the New Poor-Law Act, taking upon himself the officiality of forewarning,—"*What will be the end of it?*" If they grant permission, not to alarm them by the details, for I am well aware how easily those are intimidated, who, like honest Dogberry in the play, have "two gowns and everything handsome about them," I will mount my divining stool in as pleasant a mood as the awfulness of the subject will permit, which, I am afraid, will prove in the end no laughing matter.

And now, should the present immolating and demoralizing system of pauper legislation continue much longer, the law, the unlawful law and disgrace of this land, I will exhibit to you, good people of England, the "future in the instant," and in as few and sweet words as possible. To commence, then, my catop-tromancy: Perpetuate this heinous enactment, and, as a certain consequence, all our proscribed and unrelieved beggars and strollers—for they can't, they won't starve!—will speedily transform themselves into such agreeable "wild fowl" as murderers, robbers, assassins, forgers, rebels, &c., and the attendants on such a transformation will naturally be other metamorphoses, equally revolting, though perhaps not so poetical, as the fictitious ones so veraciously related by Ovidius Naso. Be that, however, as it may, nevertheless such characteristic mutations, (particularly whem brought home to your very doors,) \* as murders, suicides, infanticides, feticides, robberies, household insecurity, women giving birth to the offspring of their frailty on your steps, and girls attaching newborn babes, like handbills, to your knockers, will prove, I should guess, anything but pleasant to folk like yourselves, who, at present, by your negligence and unconcern in not crushing the evil in the incipient germs, if not inviting actually, are, at least, winking at the daily increase and growth of such consum-

\* Since this was written, the cut-throats of Lord William Russell, of Mr. Macreth at Ludlow, and Mr. Templeman at Islington, besides several other cases of stabbing and "the knife again," fatal or more faint, have fulfilled the soothsaying of the text, and are illustrative of the "Act's" proficiency in raising the moral character of the people!

mations; and are driving your fashionable and elegant cab phaetons about town, and your hard bargains on 'Change, as if there was nothing the matter, and "all right."

Neither, in continuation, should I calculate, knowing your peaceable temperatures, would you sneeze at such circumstances as some "young thief of two-and-twenty, or thereabouts," waylaying you at your front doors,—or when returning homewards, from your country walks, laden with cowslips and "long purples,"—or, as you paced the gas-lighted streets of London, contemplating and smiling on the passing odalisques with their scarce petticoats, or as you lay prone, (the "bell then beating one") playing pigs' overtures with variations, in your beds and blankets,—for the self-same modest gentleman to stand over your nightcaps, and with "strange oaths" and significant curses, flourishing right and left his "damned double-barrelled swords and cut and thrust pistols," ease you of a greater quantity than would be convenient of your *L. S. D.*

Nor, to wind up my prophecy, would it be very consolatory for any of you daily to peruse in the papers and periodicals characteristic descriptions, duly set forth in briefer, bourgeois, long primer, or pica type, of simultaneous risings in various parts of the country, consisting of mobs—famished mobs—of some 20,000, or more, goaded on and driven to desperation (under the old system, quiet, inoffensive parish pensioners—but now blood-thirsty and wolfish) murdering, destroying, and burning towns and cities, after the former reform precedents of Nottingham and Bristol, and, what would perhaps be worse in your estimation, gutting your own halls, parks, places, lodges, mansions, priories, seats, courts, and houses!

Yet, my word for it, such things will be, unless you, middle and upper ranks, arouse yourselves from your present state of criminal apathy and heartless unconcern. Arise, then, inhabitants of England! peers, gentles, and tradesmen, arise!—hurl from you your too-protracted supineness, and show that, notwithstanding your long inactivity and apparent neglect, you have human feelings, that you possess some sympathy for the sufferings of your brother worms, bruised and broken as they are, and have too long been, by the heel of the miscreant and the slave! And now that the winter, peradventure, a severe winter,\* is fast approaching, think with pity on the inevitable deprivations and pinching agonies, poor wretches, guiltless of nought save their ill fates and poverty, must endure—picture them to yourselves houseless, foodless, friendless, hopeless, persecuted, shivering, dying, in the cold streets and frozen highways—and to save them—*oh, do save them!*—from such utter wretchedness and destruction, and your country from their *just* retribution, when, after being abused like worms, they turn and avenge as snakes—use every constitutional *means*,—in a word, petition—everywhere petition—from your high places, from your low places, from your hills, from your valleys, from your towns, from your villages—for the instant and unqualified repeal—the repeal, the whole repeal, and nothing but the repeal, of that most abominable, most inhuman, and most impious decree, the Whigs' New-slaughtering Poor-Bill!

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### WHO IS TO PAY THE PIPER?

"Horrida tempestas cœlum contraxit et imbres!"—HOR. FLAC.

"Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
To plague the inventor."—MACBETH.

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In a former lucubration† on the heinous and injurious New Poor-Bill, I in-

\* This appeared in the London papers the 7th and 14th of October, 1837.

† "What will be the end of it?"



stituted an inquiry concerning the probable consequences of its continued administration in these realms ; and prophesied definitely what those consequences were likely to be. In my present attempt, it will be my endeavour to provoke, if possible, the public mind to consider on whom those consequences will descend ; or, in the words of my topknot, to agitate the query of “ *Who is to pay the piper ?* ”

The only doubt that now remains to be solved, is, who are to be the paymasters-general, when a fierce, turbulent, and ghastly multitude, the terrible and avenging offspring of a cruel and brutal system of proscription, shall burst forth, despairing and desperate, determined, like the crew of some “ great ammiral,” to carry everything before them ?

In the first place, then, to prosecute my *modus inquirendi*, are the ministry of this fiendlike measure to do so, or are the anti-ministerialists ? are the man-slaughtering commissioners, who riot and fatten, like “ goulés,” on its atrocities, or the cheated rate-payers, who are defrauded by its introduction ?\* In continuation, are the homes and homesteads of those who always opposed the new act, to be burnt and rifled by an infuriated mob, or are the messuages and tenements of the ones, who constantly and indefatigably advocated its establishment, to suffer the natural retribution of a cruelly-coerced and trodden-down humanity ? Are the offices of papers which have uniformly and wantonly expressed their satisfaction and applause of its horrors, all its horrors, and nothing but its horrors, which have palliated and upheld all the brutal “ orders ” and slaughters of the commissionocracy,—are these, the *Globes*, *Examiners*, and *Morning Chronicles*, alone to be attacked by an avenging populace ; or, are the innocent, and unflinching opponents of the infamous statute, like the *Times*, *Herald*, *Dispatch*, and *Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, to be drawn in, and participate in the “ condign ” which may be awarded to their contemporaries’ crimes ?

Furthermore, if Lord John Russell and Joseph Hume, both of whom so notoriously and heartlessly have distinguished themselves in its defence, are to be hooted and pelted, and pistoled, when proceeding to the House, are Mr. Walter and Mr. Fielden, who, equally and strenuously, on the other side, have made opposition to it, are they to receive like indignities ? Is there to be no difference in the day of wrath with respect of treatment, between an Earl Stanhope, who has nobly battled for God’s poor and helpless, and an Earl Fitzwilliam, who has proclaimed that the law is good enough for the “ idle, dissolute villains ; ” and that relieving the distressed, “ robs the supreme Governor of the universe of some of his attributes,” by overturning the decree, promulgated immediately after the fall, “ in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread ? ” Forbid it, justice. Yet such things have been—such want of discrimination exhibited by an excited mob—a mob rampant in the height of its lawlessness and power !

That those who, by their tyranny and hard-biting statutes, have sown the whirlwind seeds of revolution, should suffer when, ripe and organized, that revolution bursts awful from its pod, is but a well-known clause of the *lex talionis*, wrong for wrong, pikes for *skilly*, mob massacres for union murders ! But, on the other hand, that those who, foreseeing the probable results, and not being warped by the prejudice of party or pelf, would, by negating at the first the admission of the new pauper injustice into the British code, have preserved the poor from the sufferings and agonies they have undergone and will undergo, and the country at large from the retribution which will most certainly result from their (the poor’s) determination to resist those sufferings and agonies—is hard.

It is to save matters from arriving at such an alarming crisis, that I now

\* Vide “ *The Boasted Economy of the New Poor-Law*,” in Part II. of this work.



write, and have written. But how can the country be so preserved? How, if the poor, the artisans and peasantry, are continued to be cruelly coerced and destroyed beyond human forbearance, can that crisis be avoided? Do the ministry suppose that when the storm, bristling with pikes and lurid with conflagration, (which, by their tyrannical despotism, they have been instrumental in brewing), bursts forth, "fierce as ten furies—terrible as Hell!" that their unconstitutional "rural police," and those

"Pagod things of sabre sway,  
With fronts of brass and feet of clay,"

will be sufficiently potential to restrain or quell it? Or that the well-paid Editors of their most obedient, most devoted *Morning Chronicle, Globe, and Examiner*, who, in their exquisite "leaders," have essayed with forty-pen power to sugar over the unexampled horrors and injustice of the "bill," when the paupers' day of reckoning arrives, will they be competent to charm away, charm they ever so wisely, the threatening wrath of a desperate population, cheered to the onslaught by lean and festering spectres from those profoundest dungeons—the pauper-union prisons?

Will their lachrymose entreaties, then, of "do not thus when ye are strong!" and "don't trample upon and slay us, because, under the hallucination that charitable views are most ruinous in a Government,"\* we have trampled upon and slain you! quiet and lay the demon when it has started up from the abused worm? In short, will their articles of art be taken in lieu of homes, clothes, food, and fire, by the suffering multitude? And when, instructed by the powers of Downing-street and Somerset-house, they propose, as our Milton has it, "terms of composition," will they (the multitude) be compelled to a quick retreat, and straight change their revengeful minds, and THROW DOWN THEIR INCENDIARY torches, and pikes perhaps topp'd with goreful heads?

If they (the administration) are so confident, and rely on such auxiliaries in the "*ga ira*" hour of peril, they stand alone in their confidence and reliance, as they have hitherto done in their oppression and cruelty: for all who remember the Gordon "Church and King" mob, and the Bristol "Reform and King" riots, are well aware that it requires something more pungent than a handful of beggarly policemen to quell, and somewhat more of eloquence than is ingredient in the "tu whits," "tu whoos" of the sage Minerva fowl of the *Chronicle* office, and its companions, the long-necked poultry of the *Globe* and *Examiner* dittos, to soothe the concourse of many thousands.

But if ministers and madmen will allow me, I will suggest a surer means, not of extinguishing, for that's rather a difficult process, but what is a much wiser thing, the avoiding altogether the advent of that frightful occurrence—a Civil War.

It is no other than for them, conscious as they must be of the unprecedented ill success which has everywhere attended the administering of their pet measure, immediately to issue an order of council, officially authorizing the speedy destruction of the Union houses of bondage which are being built, and the turning into storehouses for the reception of those goods which are required to be *kept moist*, of the ones which are already completed. In addition, I would have them, *ex officio*, cause a proclamation to be circulated throughout the realm, declaring, that in future, it would be a capital offence for any master or overseer of a workhouse to allow a human being to perish of want and hunger in the public streets.

In a word, let them, for the present, ordain the suspension of the paupers' penal statute; and in the next assembly of Parliament, move for its total and unqualified repeal: let them do this, and their "stately homes" and stately persons will be preserved, and their country saved from the terrible catastrophes, always the results of civil anarchy and confusion.

\* So said, in the House of Lords, that remarkable *Christian*, Earl Haddington.

But will they do this? Not a bit of it. What! disgorge their ill-gotten perquisites and patronage? they would see their political antagonists, Sir Robert Peel and "the Duke," in power and Downing-street first!

Then, such being the case, it behoveth all, without regard to party, who are opposed to the revolting principles of the "bill" in question, speedily to bestir themselves; bearing in mind that, though the Whigs have been the architects of the public ruin which will assuredly ensue, they, as well as the guilty causers, will be victims. It is true there exists at present concerning the brutal edict a calm—the insurgents in Yorkshire have thrown away *some* of their pikes, and are *apparently* disbanded;—the malcontents in Wales *seemingly* quiescent;—and the minds of men of money are assured by the knowledge thereof. Improvident citizens! not to be aware that a calm is too frequently the treacherous and hypocritical forerunner of a convulsive storm! Let the inhabitants, I repeat, of this queendom look, lest, in imitation of Claudian's heroes:—

"———Tolluntur in altum,  
Ut lapsu graviore ruant!"

The preaching of the republicans should not be the signal for them to join Lord Goring carousing!

Let them, therefore, as I enjoined, in a former paper, before the destroying messengers of civil catastrophe are knocking at their doors, and while it may yet benefit the public safety, hand in hand, and heart with heart, petition for the instant and unqualified repeal of a measure, the malevolent principles of which are calculated to entail, and have already entailed, the worst and most revolting national results. Again and again, I entreat that they will shake off, as a viper, their present apathy,\* deadly, dangerous apathy, and do so; and that instantly, strenuously, and everywhere; for should they not, the tricolour of revolution—of a bloody revolution—will be floating terrific over our towns, and the red nightcap of insubordination and outrage will cover the heads of

\* Ay, and worse than apathy, the disgraceful *soaping* of those demi-devils, the Commissioners, whose barbarous sayings and doings will at last be the utter ruin of Old England. In this "lickspittle" licking, the *Hereford Guardians* have exhibited themselves as *first and filthiest* (but what can you expect from the inhabitants of Hereford? notoriously the *lowest of the low, and basest of the base*). Are not the following specimens of *kissing a Commissioner's* — very disgusting?—

"At a Meeting of the Board of Guardians of the Ledbury Union, held on the 22d day of September, 1840—Present twenty-four Guardians—

"It was resolved:—That this Board cannot allow their official connexion with Sir Edmund Head, Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, to cease, without expressing their sense of the zeal, ability, and kind (?) feeling with which, since the commencement of this Union, Sir Edmund Head has rendered his assistance to the Board. That their clerk communicate the Resolution to Sir Edmund Head, and to the Poor-Law Commissioners.—Carried with acclamation."—*Hereford Journal*, Oct. 14, 1840.

"LEOMINSTER UNION, Oct. 13, 1840.—A letter having been received by the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, Edward Evans, Esq., from Sir Edmund Head, Bart., Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, announcing his intention of relinquishing his situation within this district. It was, at a meeting of the Board, held on the 13th day of October, instant, unanimously resolved that this Board have received the intimation of Sir Edmund Head's intended resignation as Poor-Law Commissioner of this district, with deep regret, and beg leave to offer their best acknowledgments to him for his invariably courteous and kind attention to them individually and officially, and to express their most anxious hopes that his removal to another district may ensure to him the attainment of those honours (!) and advantages to which his merits and talents so peculiarly entitle him."—*Hereford Journal*, Oct. 21, 1840.

Guardians of Herefordshire (*including those of Hereford city*) ye are *worthy* of Sir Edmund Head! Sir Edmund Head, you are *worthy* of the Herefordshire Guardians! 'Tis a pity ye should be separated from one another. 'Tis such wrenchings asunder as these, that indeed touch Assistant Poor-Law Commissioners' sympathies—

Guardians of Herefordshire! ere we part,  
Give—oh! give me back my heart!

It may not be amiss to annex that this idol of the Hereford, Leominster, and Ledbury Guardians, is brother of the Sir Francis Head who, in 1838, *prevented the aged inmates of the Worcester workhouse from receiving little presents of tea, snuff, sugar, &c.* Once more, glory to Sir Edmund Head and his *tail*, the aforesaid worthy Herefordshire Guardians!



those who are now left, by the unnatural connivance of a disgraceful legislature, to starve and die in the public streets!

### PALTRY REVENGE;\* OR, MR. OASTLER'S DISMISSAL.

A FEW WORDS ADDRESSED BY THE AUTHOR OF "POOR-LAW PAPERS," &C., &C., &C., TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND, AND ESPECIALLY TO THE PEOPLE OF YORKSHIRE, ON MR. OASTLER'S DISMISSAL FROM FIXBY HALL.

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"A man he was to *all* the country *dear*!"—GOLDSMITH.

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FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,—You have all doubtless heard, with indignation and regret, of the heartless dismissal by the *ingrate Thornhills* of your dearest friend—the generous guardian of your interests—the just—the noble—the enthusiastic; your patriot—the *poor man's patriot*—Richard Oastler!

Yes, he who has for years inclined his ear to your cries as if he were your parent, and bearded your miscreant and blood-thirsty Whig oppressors even in the mouth of all their threats and power—their war-force and their police-force—their spy-force and their law-force—*he*, whose beating and indignant heart has always been in the coffins of those poor unfortunates of your order, who have not been buried, but, according as the "Act" directs, thrown into holes, like carrion, without the decent ceremony of bell, book, and pall,—*he*, whose manly and powerful eloquence has re-echoed o'er the wide land, the shrieks of the separated aged couples, and the moans of the seduced girl—seduced, because she chanced to be poor, by the "written instructions" of the hell-engendered Commission—in a word, *he*, whose blessed exertions have thrown open to public observation, and held up to public abhorrence, the manner in which those

\* Mr. Oastler's case is not the only instance of "Paltry Dismissal," which has occurred under the "active superintendence" of the three treacherous tetrarchs of Somerset-house. The 15th of October, 1836, we find the *Whig*-worldly Bishop of Ely, at Lord John Russell and Frankland Lewis's express desire, filling the ears of Mr. Holworthy, Mr. Maberley's rector, at that period, with the following "leperous distilment." The subservient diocesan writes:—

"I have this morning received another letter from the Secretary of State on the subject of the agitation which Mr. Maberley is causing in the country, stating to me that a *wilful injury has been done to a horse*, the property of Mr. C. Young, of Methwold, in the county of Norfolk, immediately after the Rev. Mr. Maberley had delivered a lecture in the neighbourhood, on the effects of the New Poor-Law!"

A London weekly paper, of Nov. 26, 1836, commenting on this malicious scripture, says:—

"Wonderful! So Mr. Maberley's lecture had the astounding and miraculous effect of doing wilful injury to a horse! To an *ass* rather, my Lord John. Our Minister of the Interior knows so little of the topography of England, that he does not even know where Methwold is; Methwold is 25 miles from Bury, and not in the county of Norfolk at all!"

It is needless to say that the *good parson Maberley* was dismissed from his curacy. But, notwithstanding that, Whig rancour did not cease to show itself against this *worthy priest* of the "Poor Man's Church;" for, in the House of Lords, July 3, 1838, we find the *Duke of Richmond* accusing, in "violent language," Mr. Maberley of "travelling through the country, endeavouring to agitate the peasantry." It was too, in the same "mouth" he designated *Mr. Dewdney, of Portsea*, as one of Lord Stanhope's "squad." But has his Grace of Richmond a right to flourish thus verdantly in the rose? We shall see. "What right," says the *Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, criticising this 'modern instance,' "has the Duke of Richmond to attribute motives, or apply saucy epithets, any more than any other man? Is the Duke of Richmond so far beyond reproof that he can indulge in attributing motives with impunity? We suspect that, if the noble duke were placed in the judgment-seat, he would exhibit an alliance with a far more 'awkward squad' than either Lord Stanhope, or Mr. Dewdney. The Duke has a 'mote in his own eye.' It is large enough to make him look *inwardly*! But what can be expected from a nobleman, who allowed the *aide-de-camp* at Waterloo of his gallant father to perish of hunger and misery in *Kennington workhouse*!"



that are in poverty among you, *have been*, and *are to be*, taken into the Bastile dungeon keeps, and assassinated, either, by the slow agony of famine, or by the speedier and perhaps more merciful method of administering (it has been done!) *poisoned-drugged broths, and arsenic-adulterated skillies*—*he*, I say, this good—this noble man—*noble by nature*, and not by royal courtesy and the trumpery trappings (a Jerry Sneak Russell, or a Melbourne Administration *pitch-fork*, may, nowadays, wear those!) of strawberry leaves, and a few yards of blue ribbon round the left stick—this noble man—(mark! the signal ingratitude of the transaction—the paltry tyranny of the affair!) has been persecuted and dismissed from Fixby, because (and nothing else) he has dared to act according to the dictates of humanity and the commands of the Holy Scriptures; and in opposition to the decree of the *present* demon-dwellers of Downing-street and Somerset-house!

Men of England! will ye silently suffer him to endure this wrong? Men and women of England! (of Yorkshire, especially, for ye are particularly his debtors) will you? Will you tamely submit to see your Patriot—*yours*—thus unjustly treated?

Here, had I not beheld their extreme guilty apathy and indifference, during, and subsequent to the introduction of the killing-no-murder New Poor-Law, with the laudable exceptions of the Rev. Messrs. *Stephens, Bull*, and *Maberley* (glory to them!) I should have appealed to the clergy—for it is their especial province\* (would they more generally used it!) to succour the dis-

\* The following excerpts will authenticate that it is not only the duty of the clergy to succour and assist the poor, but that the incomes they receive, were endowed on the express condition that they should do so:—

“Let the priests set apart the first share (of their salaries) for the building and ornaments of the church; let them distribute the second to the poor and strangers with their own hands, in mercy and humility; and let them reserve the third part for themselves.”—*24 of Elfric's Canons*.

“It was ordained that the poor should be sustained by *parsons*, by *rectors* of the church, and by the parishioners, so that *none of them die for want of sustenance*.”—*Mirror of Justices*. A work written before the Norman Conquest.

“The revenues of the church, consisting of various descriptions of tithes, were divided thus:—one-third part was taken by the priest as his own; another third-part was applied to the relief of the poor; and the other part to the building and repairing of the church.”—*Gilbert's Law of the Common Pleas*.

Selden, Pope Sylvester, Pope Simplicius, Pope Gregory, &c., &c., direct and confirm the putting apart of a fourth-part of the income of church property for the use and relief of the poor.

Though I am sorry to say the generality of the clergy have favoured the unchristian New Poor-Law, or remained careless and inactive while its dreadful results have been perpetrating, yet all have not acted so unworthily. Some noble exceptions have, here and there, sprung up, and vindicated their sacred order from the imputation of wholesale hardheartedness against the poor and helpless; and these, who have thus so nobly distinguished themselves, are no “dim religious lights”—no “dumb dogs”—but men who have shown that they can write with the pen, and speak with the tongue—orators, authors—the powerful and eloquent—worthies who may justly be designated an honour to their cloth—the “*lettered cloth*” of England. Among these clerical champions of charity—these real and virtual successors of the apostles, in act and deed, the author of this work is proud to celebrate, in the first place, the meek, Christianlike, and inestimable *Rev. G. S. Bull*, (of *Bradford, Yorkshire*), the speaker of numberless philanthropic speeches in behalf of his poorer brethren;—the author of various excellent pamphlets, &c., in the good cause—and, finally, a martyr for righteousness' sake! Then comes the victorious orator of justice and humanity, the impiously persecuted *Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens*—he of the thrilling eloquence—whose sermons and speeches, powerful and inspired, will live to shame his enemies, and the enemies of Heaven's poor—another martyr for righteousness' sake! Again, there is the *Rev. F. H. Maberley* (of *Bourn, near Caxton, Cambridgeshire*), who has done much, said much, and written much, and that nobly and well, against the infernal Act—one of Humanity's *hardest working* labourers—*unpaid*—persecuted—and another martyr. Come forth, too, for applause, the *Rev. Stephen Butler*, (of *Soberton, Hampshire*), your pamphlets must not be forgotten, or your well-intentioned endeavours in the cause of those who have few—*too few* to help them! The *Rev. Edmund Dewdney*, (of *Portsea*)—the wretched sons and daughters of Poverty owe you much, and their God will repay you *tenfold hereafter*. Your letters and petitions, *versus* Malthus and Massacre, had, I remember, the “*right bite*” about them; and to your noble exertions, I am told, it is that the principle of the Bill, with all its attendant horrors, is not carried out in your neighbourhood. God bless you! The *Rev. C. Fowell Watts*, (of *Bath*), great glory is yours for bearding the fell beasts of Malthus and “*Marcus*” in their very

tressed, and uphold those suffering injustice—and said to them, Behold! here is a man, without being bound by duty, and the *yearly reception of stipend*, as ye are,—persecuted—rancorously persecuted—for following and working out the precepts which ye preach:—*in your pulpits applaud and defend him*. Yes, thus I should have spoken; but there, now I know it would be no use; so I again turn to you, honest artisans and peasantry. Listen then to my words:—

Your benefactor, as I have previously related, is the victim of a mean, low, reptile revenge—the revenge of a set of miscreants—the Downing-street and Somerset-house miscreants (for Thornhill, poor devil, is only their agent or their dupe), who know his virtues, and, like the devils, tremble at the knowledge thereof: in brief, are tired of hearing him called the good, “the good King Richard.” Now, I will tell you what I would have you do, to show the “lickspittles,” who persecute him for *loving you*, that you are not insensible of what he has done, and still is striving to do for you: present him with a piece of plate; not as an adequate return for his unparalleled services in your behalf—*those you can never repay*—but as a small lively token of your gratitude for them; and, at the same time, to specify to the world, that the working population of England are *not quite* the ungrateful, senseless wretches their proud, bloody Whig tyrants would make them out. Do this; and, that even the lowest in circumstances among you may be enabled to chronicle their esteem for their benefactor, let the purchase-money of the plate to be presented, be raised by *penny subscriptions only*.

It is not the *ounce worth* of the silver or gold contained in the vase or urn, or the exquisite beauty of its design and workmanship, that *will weigh* with such a man as *Oastler*—it might with meaner spirits—but he is of a higher mood. He would not, I am morally confident, give three straws for all the mere gold and silver in the world—except, indeed, that its possession might enable him to extend his sphere of usefulness and power of doing good. No, it will be the sympathetic exhibition of your regard at this particular moment that will touch his manly heart; and tell him, as he endures a diminution of health and fortune for your sakes, that he has not risked either in vain, that those, whose cause he has advocated so enthusiastically and so long, with whatever faults their enemies may brand them—a want of gratitude is not among the number!

I am, Friends and Fellow-Countrymen,

Your sincere well-wisher,

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

July 6, 1838.

dens—for actively espousing the side of the widow and orphan, the bedridden and houseless, and making their cries and moans audible throughout the width and breadth of the land! Your letters in the *Times* paper will be your *best epitaph*. The Rev. J. D. Schomberg, (*Master of Stoke Grammar School, Hinckley, Leicestershire*, whose works on “English History” I would have you read) is a sworn opponent of the New Poor-Law; and so is the Rev. John James, (*of Fardre, Neath*); and so are the Rev. Thomas Curtis, (*Rector of Seven Oaks, Kent*); the Rev. P. F. Clay, (*of Chawleigh, Devon*); the Rev. A. S. Atchison, (*Teigh Rectory, Stamford*); the Rev. Edward Duncombe (cousin to the Hon. W. Duncombe, Rector of Newton Kyme, Tadcaster, and the writer of several pamphlets of pith on Poor-Law matters, and one of the most enthusiastic defenders of the Gilbert Unions, the which those unclean spirits of centralization, the Poor-Law Commissioners, are now attempting, with all their might and main, to dissolve). Honour to this little “army of holy martyrs” in the good cause of the patriot and the poor man (for all of them have been persecuted, more or less, for their benevolence), England’s hierarchy hath none worthier, nobler, or more humane! But I have forgotten to include the Rev. Sir George Robinson, Bart., (*of Kettering, Northamptonshire*), whose conscientious resignation of Chairman of the Kettering Board of Guardians in 1839 is a *greater honour* to him than a mitre; and the Rev. Richard Cruttwell, of Spexhall, Suffolk, (author of several *sound-reasoning* political works on the currency question, &c., his last work being “*Reform without Revolution*,”) a very good and public-spirited man, who has voluntarily incurred the sacrifice of several thousand pounds in the affairs of the afflicted. And then there is that poor but upright disciple, the Inde-



## THE PROSECUTION OF THE REV. JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

A FEW WORDS ON THE ATTEMPT OF THE "BASE, BRUTAL, AND BLOODY" ON THE LIFE AND LIBERTY OF THAT GOOD MAN: ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE OF LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE.\*

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ALICE.—"My father, wherefore was John Ball imprisoned?  
Was he not charitable, good, and pious?"—DR. SOUTHEY'S WAT TYLER.

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MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,—It seems the miscreancy of Downing-street and Somerset-house, at the criminal expenditure of several thousand pounds of the public money, and through the congenial assistance of spies, police, informers, false witnesses, black and white swearers of the Joseph Hume complexion, &c., inclusive of a troop of "gallant hussars," under the command of the puissant Colonel Wemyss,† of that ilk (the Government surely highly honoured that distinguished officer!), have at last summoned "pluck," after a month's due consideration of the consequence, to arrest, "*vi et armis*," your tried friend and patriotic benefactor, the Rev. J. R. Stephens; and what is more, by having recourse to "green bags," filled to bursting, with "*non mi ricordo*" evidence, have committed that good, just, patriotic, and humane man, like a common felon, to take his trial at the next assizes, where, doubtless, it is intended, if you, my friends, do not look to it, he is to have "a fair, free, open trial," where *Chadwick*‡ can "choose his jury, and appoint his judges."

And why have they, his persecutors, done so? Why have they committed him? Simply, my friends and fellow-countrymen, because he was, and has dared to be, your benefactor;—because he was, and dared to be, for humanity, Christianity, and justice, for peace on earth and goodwill towards men; and because he was determined to uphold the Bible, and confound and shame the powers of hell, and its assistant commissionocracy of Somerset-house, the doing which, of course on his part, was immediately constituted by his enemies rank sedition and high treason, without benefit of appeal, and not to be tolerated. So these Russells, Chadwicks, Frankland Lewises, &c., incontinently go to their dirty work, and suborn (as they did that half-saved creature of too much land, and too little sense, Thornhill, in Oastler's case) informers, with their mouths chuckful of lies—(and soul! some of them were thumpers!) to accuse him (Stephens) of saying this and that, which he did not say; and to pervert this and that which he did. By the assistance of such credible auxiliaries, such "competent false witnesses," not to mention the agreeable circumstance of some one's old mill ruin,§ (that mill-ruin, mind! being somewhat *providentially* insured against the conflagration which was expected to take place) conveniently being made to ignite, they apprehend, in the face of all

pendent Minister of Loxley, the Rev. John Hanson, whom Dr. Pye Smith, in 1838, persecuted, and deprived of his rightful share of the *Regium Donum*, because he said the "Act" was evil; and there is likewise, the Rev. W. G. Cookesley, of Eaton—blessings on him!

\* This appeared in several of the London and Northern papers in Jan. 1839.

† This officer was ordered by the Government to Lancashire with his troops, as body guard to the police constable who apprehended Mr. Stephens.—"*Honour bright!*"

‡ Secretary to the Poor-Law Commission, and, of course, a very prominent person in the prosecution of Mr. Stephens.

§ The original indictment against Mr. Stephens was that he had set fire to a mill in the neighbourhood of Ashton, but, owing to certain *significant* circumstances, best known to the Downing-street respectables concerned, they were uncommonly glad to avoid such dangerous ground, and to substitute in the end an impeachment of high treason against their three Majesties of Somerset-house, a crime of which, if ever man was guilty, Stephens certainly was.



law but Whig law, and in defiance of all justice but Whig justice, him, the finest-toned of the silver trumpets of humanity, as a maker of violent speeches, and an incendiary!

God bless the mark! the Whigs to talk of violent speeches and incendiaries! Oh! I shall burst with grin: do let some one cut my staylace.

To be sure, who but they ever understood such contraband affairs so well: *vide* their *Swing* fireworks, their Brougham's fire-words, and their Bristol burnings!

Violent speeches and incendiaries! quotha; and that too, from a faction who, through the medium of one of their mouthpieces, religiously prayed for the arrival of the period (how d'y'e do, my Lord Brougham?) when little boys might play at football, and chuckfarthing with kings' and queens' heads in the streets!

Violent speeches and incendiaries! and that from a faction who, through the medium of another of their mouthpieces, proclaimed an admirable desire (how are you, Mr. Edward Baines?) to treat their then queen as the French did the ill-fated Antoinette!

Violent speeches and incendiaries! and that from a faction who, through the medium again of another of their mouthpieces, not only strenuously enjoined, but saw it properly put into execution (fine day, Mr. *Morning Chronicle*!), the hero of Waterloo, Lord Londonderry, and others, nearly killed with brick-bats, and the windows of Apsley-house beaten to smithereens, the while the wife of the aforesaid hero of Waterloo lay dead in the house!

Violent speeches and incendiaries! and that from a faction who, through the medium of yet another of their mouthpieces, and eke their master (Mr. Daniel O'Connell, hold up your brazen countenance, and look yourself straight in the face, without blushing, if you can) but the other day threatened to march over two millions' sterling of ragged rascals, every mother's son of them, fighting men, between the ages of sixteen and sixty, if justice were not granted to "ould Ireland," *i. e.*, to himself!

Truly, after the detail of these veritable examples of Whig anti-meekness, and I could give a thousand others, had I time, it is rather superfluous for Whigs to prate of violent speeches and incendiaries; at any rate, before they do so, they should see what the Duke of Newcastle, whose Nottingham mansion they destroyed; and the corporation and merchants of Bristol, whose city they heated red-hot, have to say of them; and after they have heard their opinions of their (the Whigs') temperate habits in action and debate, as the poet says, whom their Scottish brethren in politics helped to starve:—

"Let them talk about decorum,  
Who have characters to lose,"

which, I am sure, none of the present denizens of Downing-street have (certainly not Lord John Russell, or his Viscountship of Melbourne, who has more than once been as sweet as treacle to other men's wives.

But to return to Mr. Stephens: I find, as if ashamed to prosecute any more for violent speeches and incendiarisms—arts by which they themselves learnt to rise—they now, hard up for a "most exquisite reason," and determined, at all hazards, if possible, to weave the woof of poor Stephens's winding sheet, have broken new ground of offence, and charge your benefactor, in the words of that reigning beauty, Mr. Edwin Chadwick, filtered through the mouth of a *Mister Brandt*\* (he's a neat article too), "of using intimidation and threats, in order to prevent the due administration of the laws, and more particularly of those relating to the poor."

If such only is Mr. Stephens's offending, wherefore, let me ask, was that

\* Mr. Brandt was the *worthy* barrister who was employed to conduct the prosecution of Mr. Stephens, with whom was Mr. Duck.

gentleman alone selected for a Government prosecution, when so many others do, and have done, by "intimidation and threats," as they call it, obstruction to the administration of the Bastile system in these realms? Wherefore, I make repetition, as equally criminal in their opposition to the administration of the new law, as the Rev. individual now coerced, was not Earl Stanhope, Lord Falmouth, the Bishop of Exeter, Messrs. Fielden, Oastler, Walter, O'Connor, Cobbett, Bull, Bussey,\* &c.; the editors of the *Times*, *Herald*, *Standard*, *Dispatch*, *Conservative Journal*, and the better portion of the proprietors of the London and Provincial press? Why were not these lords and gentlemen dragged, at the same time, with Mr. Stephens, from their wives and families, and put to sleep on iron-bedsteads? Why, too, if humanity be a crime, and, as such, liable to fine and imprisonment, were not the Guardians of Gloucester and Worcester, who recently resisted the tyrannical commands of the Commissioner† (glory to them!) also, in like manner, accommodated with a Crown prosecution for their virtuous resistance?

Why, again and again, I repeat, "most potent, grave, and reverend seigniors" of Downing-street, Somerset-house, and the places never whispered to "ears polite," did you, in your wisdom, seize one "Cade" (to use the phraseology of the Brummagem baronet, Bulwer,‡ whom you have lately manufactured), while you left thousands equally dangerous to the welfare of yourselves and inhumanity, at large? Why, pray you, when your hands were in it, did you not furnish all the agitators against wholesale pauper-extermination with iron bedsteads at your expense, and two thousand pound bail at their own? §

In short, while you were about it, why, was not even I, simple G. R. Wythen Baxter, who have been as inflammatory as most in my writings antagonistic to your precious slaughter-system edict (*vide* my "*Poor-Law Papers*,"|| which used to give all of you such bellyaches sometime ago), why was not I deemed worthy of the honour you have lately conferred on Mr. Stephens? I, who, to the best of my pen, ink, and lungs, have excited the inhabitants of Herefordshire, Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire, Pembrokeshire, &c., &c., to prove resistive under the restraints of Somerset-house, and who, on one occasion, last winter, treated some chaps ("idle, lazy, dissolute villains," of course) with pints round to hiss and groan at an Assistant-Commissioner (wasn't that atrocious of me, eh! Mr. Edwin Chadwick, Secretary?). Really, my Lord John Russell, I take it very unkind of your Home-Departmentship, that my claims to the notice of your respectable (!) spies and police should be overlooked. Could you not now, I beseech you, spare one of the many you have placed about the body of my friend Oastler, for my special superintendence? Do think of it,

\* For the guilt of these lords and gentlemen, *vide* the *Opinions of the Poor-Law Opposition*, attached to this work.

† The Worcester Guardians with regard to the inmates of the workhouse receiving little presents of tea, sugar, &c., forbidden by the Commissioner *Sir Francis Head*, and the Gloucester ones nobly determining to afford out-door relief, a little previous to this period. The Worcester Guardians resigned December, 1838.

‡ "It is melancholy to contrast the present 'demonstrations' (i.e., the Poor-Law Agitation) with the conduct of the working classes in 1830: then, what different leaders!—what different opinions!—what practical sense!—what temperate firmness! Who would have thought that in 1838, the schoolmaster had given place to the Cades?!!!"—*Monthly Chronicle*, October, 1838, edited by "*Cheveley Bulwer* and *Adultery Lardner*. Bulwer, at the writing of this, had just been cooked a *Bart.*, and wanted to be bombastic and bitter (!) on the strength of the honour (?).

§ Stephens, in prison, was made to lie upon an iron bedstead, and, moreover, when bailed, sureties to the enormous amount of £2,000 (£1,000 himself, and two others in £500 each) were demanded of him, his income being only, at the most, £200 per annum. And yet, unconstitutional, unjust, and tyrannical, as was this bail, it was obtained, so appreciated and respected was the character of the man! Mr. Stephens was arrested on the 27th of December, 1838.

|| *Vide* the *Conservative Journal* for 1837 and 1838, and the *Times*, *Charter*, *Operative*, *Sheffield Iris*, &c., &c., at various periods subsequently.



and that shortly; there's a dear! for it must be so nice to have a gentleman, at the public's expense, constantly waiting on one!

I have, in the foregoing, I think, my friends and fellow-countrymen, sufficiently exposed the gross partiality of the powers that be, in confining the *honour* of a Crown prosecution to your own, the man of your choice, Mr. Stephens. I shall now, therefore, proceed to talk with you on another subject, *i.e.*, the protection and assistance it behoves you all to afford your benefactor, Mr. Stephens, now he is in trouble; trouble, which, you must be well aware, was incurred for your sakes, and your sakes only. Watch then over his safety as if he were your brother, and do so unceasingly; for his enemies are most unscrupulous and blood-thirsty. And as they have massacred already thousands of your poorer comrades and their families, without the least remorse, so will they now, if not deterred, massacre him. Be it yours then, to be always ready to protect him from their atrocious designs; and to defeat, by your energetic and most uncompromising opposition, the cruelties and injustices they are longing to inflict on his innocent and inoffensive head. Be it yours, I recapitulate, by a glorious and enthusiastic chorus from the Overture to *Masaniello* (you understand me?) to drown and counteract the flattering hopes of your oppressors, that they shall be able, one by one, to crush your patriots and protectors. Give ear to what I have said, I implore you, and to be enabled to consummate the release of your dear Stephens, forego, for the present, all other political discussions, all prospects of future enfranchisement; let the suffrage for a while alone, and think solely of means to assist, encourage, and defend him, who has so often assisted, encouraged, and defended you and yours. Far be it from me to incite you to violence or opposition to any duly-constituted authorities: but Stephens is an innocent man; and, at any rate, at any risk, it must be yours to see that he has justice, full, ample, and unqualified justice!

I am, my Friends and Fellow-Countrymen,

(With three cheers for yourselves, and three more, and those hearty ones, for Stephens, Oastler, Fielden, Stanhope, and all your well-wishers),

Yours, very sincerely,

January 7, 1839.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

## SOCIETIES FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO PAUPERS.

"Christian service, and true chivalry."—RICHARD II., Act II., Sc. 1.

"This is not the cause of faction, or of party, or of any individual, but the common interest of every man in Britain."—LETTERS OF JUNIUS.

Winter, with its snow-storms, sweeping floods, and bitter colds, is fast approaching,\* but still, notwithstanding the exertions of the philanthropist, the eloquence of the orator, and the writings of the author, as yet nothing, save the publicity of its unparalleled wrongs, has been achieved for the cause of outraged humanity! consequently, as a sad alternative, thousands of poor wretches, guilty of nought but their poverty and misfortunes, in the severe catastrophes of the coming season, must, and will be delivered over, bound hand and foot, to the hands of a slaughtering Commissionocracy, who, in their diabolical characters as executioners of the old and helpless, will mitigate no official cruelty, nor spare any official injustice, in unconstitutionally shortening the lives of those whom poverty and a Nerolike decree have placed at their disposal.

\* This first appeared in the autumn of 1837, in the *Metropolitan Conservative Journal* of December 2, 1837.



To wipe off this stain from our national escutcheon, and, in order that they may not be handed down to posterity as participators in the New Poor-Law barbarities, it immediately behoves the inhabitants of this country, of all ranks and conditions, to be up and doing, and essay, by every means in their power, to effect the liberation of their poorer brethren from destruction and the union sepulchres, and to ward off the awful consequences (some of which have already been experienced) which assuredly will ensue to their native England, when the turning of the bruised worm takes place,—when humanity, insulted to the top of her endurance, in the persons of the now proscribed and heinously ill-treated paupers, can bear the heavy burden of tyranny and oppression no longer.

To prevent, if possible, the realization of a retribution, which may involve all in one indiscriminate destruction, to prevent such a national catastrophe, I reiterate, is the bounden duty of every lover of his country. Such being the case, the author of these “Poor-Law Papers,” well-advised from Lord John Russell’s oft-repeated proclamations that the measure “works well,” and the continued issuing of his creatures (the Commissioners’) “circulars,” or, warrants for the hastening of pauper extermination throughout England and Wales, that no redress of grievances is to be expected from the present ministry, proposes the following plan for the better provision of the poor, and to rescue them from the fierce clutches of their iron oppressors, into the humane and patriotic keeping of his countrymen, *i. e.*, to establish in the metropolis, under suitable government, an association to watch over the interests of, and protect from official tyranny, the poor and suffering population, and, by degrees, branch ones, from the parent or central society, in every city and town in the kingdom; and let these societies or associations be conducted by presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, clerks, and a board of members, or guardians, to be chosen in periodically.

Furthermore, to establish these societies, or associations, and to defray the expenses thereof, let subscriptions be opened under the patronage of influential and well-beloved persons in every county: as for exemplification, in Yorkshire, under the direction of Earl Stanhope and Mr. Oastler; in Berkshire, of Mr. Walter; in Lancashire, of Mr. Fielden, &c., &c., and so on. And that these subscriptions may be within the means of all conditions, let from one penny to a sovereign, and from that upwards, as the munificence of the subscriber may suggest, be received.

And when the societies are organized, let the following include some of the resolutions, rules, and regulations of their proceedings:—

No. 1. Let eloquent agents of charity, at periodical seasons, be dispatched through the country (their expenses being defrayed from the funds of the institutions), to lecture on and expose, in constitutional language, the atrocious principles of the New Poor-Laws.

No. 2. Let a continual communication be kept up between the provincial branches and the central society at London, in order that all instances of official cruelty and injustice to paupers, happening in their several jurisdictions, may be duly reported to the metropolitan board: as, for example, all cases of starvation from relief having been refused; all forcible separations, which, at the instigation of the new system’s officials, have taken place between men and their families, marking down, at the same time, the subsequent consequences which have been entailed on those families, through the absence of their natural protectors; all deaths of paupers which have occurred within the unions, with reference to those instances, which they (the societies) adjudge to have befallen, owing to the neglect of the Union Medical Practitioner, or the other authorities; and let the central board register these accidents and offences, and, from time to time, through the medium of the press, lay them before the public, and, if possible, before the two Houses of Parliament.

No. 3. In cases of the deaths of paupers by wilful neglect, or refusal on the part of the proper authorities to afford them relief and assistance, let it be the

duty of the society in whose jurisdiction such instances shall occur, to enter legal proceedings against those neglecting or refusing to administer suitable assistance, and prosecute the same for murder or manslaughter, as the mitigating or aggravating features of the case may suggest.

No. 4.—Let the societies memorialize the bishop of the diocese, in all cases of pauper burial which shall be performed without the usual and decent ceremonies of bell, pall, prayer, &c., &c.

No. 5.—Should, at any time, the persecuted pauper-population be excited, by their agonies, to turn on their oppressors, let the funds of the societies be employed to procure them legal defence and counsel, and, if possible, consummate their acquittal.

No. 6.—Let it become a regulation that every yearly subscriber, of whatever amount, to one of these societies, shall be presented with a medal, having an appropriate motto engraved upon it, to wear on popular occasions, so that the people may be enabled to distinguish *their friends*, and that they, the wearers, may be known from the brutes who batten on human flesh.

No. 7.—Let all innkeepers, vintners, and coffee-house proprietors, &c., &c., who shall enroll their names as members of these societies, be instructed to display a card or paper in their windows, advertising this announcement: “*No paper that advocates pauper-extermination taken in here.*”

No. 8.—Let the ladies be especially invited to patronize and join these societies.

No. 9.—Let premiums be awarded to all poets, authors, and other writers, who shall expose and make notorious the unprincipled extortions and barbarities of the commissionocracy and their creatures, and the heart-breaking sufferings of the poor.

No. 10.—Let specimens of the quality and the allowable quantity of the union bread, “pork broth,” “sticking-pieces,” and other ingredients of the official “*tenders*,” be exhibited for public inspection and execration, at the offices of the several societies in town and country.

No. 11.—Let the members of the different societies, in each of their districts, call upon the sheriffs, or legal officers, to authorize meetings in the open air, in order that petitions may be signed for the speedy abolition of the Whig Bastille decree.

No. 12.—And lastly, let the members of these *humane* societies bind themselves by an obligation, never to dissolve, or cease agitating, until the repeal—the entire, unqualified repeal—of the legislative enormity, which they co-operated to abolish, take place, and the poor be restored to their former constitutional and natural rights and liberty.\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Having, in the foregoing, given a brief outline, or syllabus, of an organized plan for the protection of the suffering poor from the barbarous aggressions of their oppressors, and for the promotion of the abolition of their British slave-trade, the Author of these “*Poor-Law Papers*” hopes, in conclusion, that his suggestions will be taken into serious consideration, without regard to rank or station, party or prejudice,† by all those whose humanity, manhood, and Chris-

\* Some of the plans here propounded have since been adopted, and acted upon, by the Chartists in the management of their affairs, and partially, I believe, by the *Anti-New Poor-Law Association* and *Rate-payers’ Anti-Centralization Society*, which have been subsequently established in the Metropolis. The *Anti-New Poor-Law Association* (the metropolitan one) was first formed in January, 1838; the *Anti-Centralization Society* issued its prospectus June 1, 1840. May it prosper!

† Among those who, without regard to rank or station, party or prejudice, have righteously combined, like a banded family of affectionate relations, to hate the New Poor-Law for its cruelties’ sake, are, and have been, the good Lord Kenyon, the Duke of Newcastle, a nobleman truly British and benevolent in his opinions; Earl Stanhope, John Fielden, Esq., M.P., Richard Oastler, Esq., and John Walter, Esq., too famous for their patriotism and humanity



tianity, are opposed and inimical to the present new system, the paramount and especial principle of which is, the utter extirpation, by a slow and agonizing process, of all those whom destitution and natural infirmities have made amenable to its dread influence.

Nov. 23, 1837.

## DEATH IN THE STREETS.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE NEW POOR-LAW.

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“ ————— whose desire  
 Was to be glorious; ’twas a foolish quest,  
 For which to gain and keep, he sacrificed all rest.”—CHILDE HAROLD.

“ Its best hearts sinking—unrelieved by one,  
 In the chilly streets and squares of London!”—DON JUAN, JUNIOR.

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The life of an author is thought by some to be a life of degradation and misery, the last resource of a misanthrope or a madman; and numerous treatises have been written by authors themselves concerning its thick-coming sorrows, its hopes deferred, and its aspirations never to be realized. I’ll allow its having all these disadvantages—that is, if the author be unsuccessful;—but, then, what are its joys if successful?—sweet, swelling, brilliant, an opium-dream delicious! a rocket existence ever ascending—at least, in the rapturous fancy of its liver, a life of pulse which is palpitating every moment with marvel and ecstasy, with feelings beautiful and new—with sensations unknown to the common herd! For to him (the gifted one) the sky, which is blue to others, appears a deeper blue; the sun, which is bright, a brighter brightness; the moon, which is romantic, a greater romance: while to his enamoured sense the gush and flow of silver streamlets speak and prophesy; flowers gracefully swing their scented, bee-haunted cups in sympathy; and mountains, coronated with awful and tremendous clouds, and “deserts idle,” are his companions, his natural audience who listen to his songs, and often re-echo his solitary but soul-breathing sounds, as he murmurs—it may be mournfully—

“A music sweeter than their own!”

to require any additional laudation from my pen; B. D’Israeli, Esq., M.P., a man of superior heart and head, humanity equal to his talents, and talents equal to his humanity, one who has never ceased in the House to give his unqualified opposition to the “Act,” in spite of *Peel* and *place*; that most meritorious mitre on the bench, his Lordship of Exeter, and of extensive goodwill towards his poorer brethren, as his continued and exemplary exertions to repeal the iniquitous new statute, which has so abused and exterminated them, has shown; the Hon. W. Duncombe, *honourable* by titular courtesy, but *right honourable* in private and political conduct; General Johnson, known in his own neighbourhood as the “*good old General*,” a designation he has earned by his kind charities and active benevolence; Mr. Alderman Harmer, whose unceasing exposure, in the *Dispatch*, of the brutalities of the Bastile system has planted laurels on his brow; and a few others who have distinguished themselves as men of feeling and humanity, now that feeling and humanity are no longer the order of the day, amongst whom, Messrs. Day, Boxer, S. Wells, R. Blakey, L. Pitkethley, J. Bowen, J. Perceval, S. Roberts, R. J. Richardson, Whittle Harvey, W. Roworth, &c., &c., must by no means remain unhonoured. Hereafter, in the better world, they will have their reward, and even here, should the cruelly-coerced people at last rise and deal furious retribution on their heartless oppressors, it will be well for them, when others are undergoing the horrors of revolutionary Lynch-law, heads bleeding dreadfully from every pinnacle, and broken bodies lying trodden under foot, and *mashed* in the streets’ mire, it will, I repeat, be well for the beloved opponents of the “Act” to be thus, individually, addressed by the enraged, insurgent multitude:—

“O princely Buckingham! we kiss *thy hand*,  
 In sign of league and amity with thee;  
 Now fair befall thee and thy noble house!  
*Thy garments are not spotted with our blood.*”



He is a creator, and lo ! lovely and many are his creations ! thoughts, sentiments, feelings, philosophies, morals, kind words—the hero-man and the angel-woman ; the battle and the bower ; the landscape lonely, and the crowded cities of the living ; faithful love, noble integrity, heavenly charity, heroic, Godlike daring—the sage, the saint, the warrior and the beauty—all immortal from his fashioning mind, are his works—works which never die, but live, for ever and ever, like gods !

Oh, the day-dreams of an author ! and oh, the night-dreams ! His the moments of intense heart-feeling, of the soul's conquering with brilliant victories the body's sensual apathy and mere appetites : his the standing, like a statue colossal with intelligence, above his kind—the sorry, senseless, slavish crowd : his the bust, the portrait, the monumental marble, the page of history and much honour his epitaphs—renowned in his language, adored in his line. Such his day-dreams, often, often realized, and his night ones :—his, when he sleeps,—his, for beautiful fair ones, girls of heaven, houris and angels, yet passionate and female still, with rounded, rosy limbs—the blissful visions of his own lovely imagination, to bend o'er his slumbers, and, in delicious abandonment, play with, and twine round their small taper fingers, his long flowing hair, and with their mouths, pouting with vermilion bloom, kiss him into heavenly sensations and languors voluptuous !

Even at this time when I recall, as if they were a band of glittering warriors marching in the shine of noon, the thrilling, proud, and enthusiastic hours I have experienced during my probationship as an author, a sun-burst of high and pleasing remembrances breaks in brilliant volume o'er me ; and I forget all the sacrifices it elicited—for I have made sacrifices. I had a daughter, a fairy child, with merry laughing eyes and lips of pretty pout, who, like a bird

——— that rifles blossoms on a tree,  
Turning them inside out with arch audacity,

used to dance around me, and bring me flowers, cowslips, primroses, blue-bells, and daisies, in her little white frock—she faded like them :—it would have seared another's heart—but mine—mine was of a higher mood. I had a wife—I see her yet, beautiful vision ! I see her when the virgin flush on her soft and burning cheek, told she loved the child of song and sorrow, and would give up all for him—I see her, suffering angel ! on her death-bed, pallid, painful, a pearl-bead parting from its silken string—dimmed those fond eyes—on those dear lips the red rose withering into pale blossom,—when she looked her last look—oh, that last !—her last farewell to him she had loved so fondly and so well !—Her last words—her last words !—Oh, God ! never to be forgotten, those last words—

“ When I'm laid low i'the grave and quite forgotten,  
May'st thou be happy in a fairer bride !  
But none can ever love thee like Monimia.”

There was another familiar being too, a son of unappreciated genius, a kind, noble-minded man, whose heart and hand sympathised so oft with others' sorrows, and partook benevolently of another's joys—his praises and his warm greetings used to make me forget the malice of the world we live in, its neglect and mockery. And then our mutual walks by the running river, and in the green meadows—the books we read together—the cheerful evening glass in that old well-remembered room—his copies of verse so pure ; so pathetic—his reciting them, with tears rolling down his cheeks, his harmless fun, his frolics, his jokes—so fond of flowers—a jumping, joyous creature among his fruit trees in his paternal orchard. But, alas ! alas !

Matthew is in his grave, yet now  
Methinks I see him stand,  
As at that moment, with a bough  
Of wilding in his hand !

But enough; why probe scarcely closed wounds, why awaken the chords of a lute long, long broken!

I remember when a boy (I was a clever, or as Shakspeare calls it, "a parlous boy") the enthusiastic, the admiring sensations I felt—those sensations, though softened down, hold yet—while perusing the public journals, I came to the common announcements usually prefixed to publishers' advertisement lists—"Shortly will be published, by the Author of —;" or, "A new work by Mr. —;" or, "Second edition of —," &c., &c. And how I envied the feelings of those too fortunate literary magnets thus spoken of! and what would I not then have given, what not have suffered and sacrificed, to have experienced their brilliant success, and continued and constant succeeding!

And then my first printed and published article! Proud, delightful was the conscious thrill as I beheld the thoughts of my thought, the eldest born of my brain, lisping playfully and prettily in the lucid typography of the two-and-sixpenny monthly! Joy for ever! I had identified myself with the gifted ones of the day—was one of their "order of merit"—was, as Scott said on a similar occasion, "known among them a'!"—was too an Arcadian! The triumph of the bluff admiral, who has risen by his high resolution from before the mast, when he sees his meteoric ensign flouting terribly o'er the disabled and sinking deckers of his country's foes, as they are scattered ingloriously, plank by plank, on the narrow seas, is "deep, thrilling, stern, severe;" but it is nothing, mere animal gratification, to what the author, the successful author feels! Oh! to be *the one*, and to be pointed out by your friends and companions, those who perchance formerly neglected or despised, but are forced to praise at last—to love you then—as the mother of the conqueror Napoleon was wont to point out to visitors the picture of her favourite boy—her "beautiful and brave," not as Lucien, not as Louis, not as Jerome, but as "*that is he!*" is worth suffering for—more it is worth dying for—ay, if it were in torments dreadful!

Such were the words of a disappointed, but highly enthusiastic author to his kind and single-hearted friend—his only friend, for authors, disappointed ones especially, have few friends, who had previously been persuading him to forsake his unwelcome profession, and its precarious triumphs and heart-breaking defeats, and remain quietly with him: at the same time offering his house as his home and refuge-place for the future. But as well attempt, with the Danish autocrat, to arrest the booming oncoming of the "dark, heaving, boundless, endless, and sublime," as to turn a son of thought back from pursuing his soulful march over the nettles and the thorns which so plenteously beway his destiny, even when that destiny is happy!

G\*\*\* (for reasons of a private nature I shall not mention his name; in fact my doing so would only fix a too clear and definite stigma on a country, the only one in the world, which punishes poverty *worse* than crime, and regards genius less than guineas), G\*\*\* appreciated, with streaming eyes and a beating heart, his friend's well-intentioned kindness: he thanked him gratefully; but to cease to write, to give up his proud hopes and long-cherished wishes of a name, with him was equivalent to cease to live. And can it be wondered at? From a child his soul had been sowed with those beautiful but dangerous seeds, the attributes of genius; and most carefully, most unremittingly, in his succeeding years, had he attended their culture, fostered their growth, and watered them incessantly with the tears of his feelings and sympathies. It was even then, in that early state of existence, he would raise his little hands to heaven, and, in imitation of the Jewish suzeran, pray *not* for riches—*not* for happiness—*not* for long life, and its aftermath of "honour, love obedience, troops of friends"—but for *genius*—the genius which should find deep thoughts in



flowers, and to whom "high mountains" would be a "feeling"—the genius which should make his name frequent and famous in men's mouths. And fearfully had his prayer been attended to: for the little hereditary property which had been bequeathed him by his father, owing (to use the slang of the preface writers) to circumstances over which he could exercise no controul, he had been, through the agency of the blessed laws, or rather law-suits, of his country, dispossessed of.—And his happiness?—How long that had been a forgotten word—an anonymous sound to him!—He had lost a beautiful, young, and attached wife—he had mourned her cherub child!—and as for old age, and its happier followers, those, as this brief chronicle of his sad history will specify, he was never destined to know!

All his endeavours to raise himself, *malgré* his first-rate and rare acquirements, had been in vain, for he possessed not that laurel-crowner of genius, interest; without which, talents—the most transcendent talents, are, as every-day events are showing, and every-day suicides are specifying, worse than nothing—infinately worse than mediocre abilities. It is true his lucubrations, his piquant essays, thrilling tales of earnest feeling, and plaintive and vowelled poesy, had graced anonymously the columns of many of the periodicals, and were, doubtless, perused with passive approbation by the inconsiderate and unreasonable million, who read through lust for novelty, regardless,—for what cared they?—that the while the poor author was wretched, destitute, and unknown! Yet not the least discouraged, though sorely, severely tried,—for his was a species of literary passion, which nothing could extinguish, save death, and death alone,—he was for ever making new attempts to obtain that sky-seat among the gifted of his country, which his talents and genius so pre-eminently deserved. And, at the time that this conversation, previously alluded to, took place, he was meditating another journey to the Metropolis, proposing to offer the publishers some MSS. which he had lately, and for some time, been closely engaged upon; and which, his too-partial, unsophisticated heart prophesied, had only to be brought before the reading world to meet the appreciation they so richly merited. But how were they to be brought before the reading world? for when did a publisher ever take genius without competent coin or introductory interest, on trust? When did ever a Whig premier prove prude, and refuse a retiring pension of indefinite thousands a-year when offered him? These are clenchers, truly!

But to proceed.—Notwithstanding the earnest and well-meant entreaties of his friend, he shook hands, gave him a last look—his last!—for it was destined to be his last, and proceeded, with a few shillings and his MSS., on foot to London. Yes, the owner of the most exquisite feelings and the noblest sentiments in the world—the eloquent, the poet, the gentle-hearted—he who could rule,

“—— like a wizard, the world of the heart,

And could call up its sunshine, or draw down its showers!”

walked a weary 135 miles on foot, while hundreds—the vain, the vicious, the vulgar, and the worthless,—passed him in haughty scorn, lolling luxuriously on the soft cushions of their coaches, publishing unblushingly their ill-deserved insolence, and ease:—but such is life, the more's the pity though!

In due time, his slender frame cruelly shattered, for his constitution, like that of all sedentarily-disposed persons, was naturally weakly, he reached the Metropolis;—and, after the necessary rest, took his beloved MSS. to publisher after publisher, but only experienced, as might have been foretold, under the present partial and corrupt state of book-making and puffery, refusal—refusal couched under the varied and usual forms of polite heartlessness:—“They were sorry to say that their present engagements were so uncommonly numerous, that it would not be in their power to undertake the work he had the kind-



ness to propose to them:" or, "most respectfully begged to state, that they acted exclusively as publishing agents, and only published for authors, who paid all the expenses of paper and print themselves:" or, "felt much obliged by his kind offer of publishing the work, but thought it would not suit their connexion; therefore must respectfully decline it:" or, "returned their thanks for the offer of his MSS., but regretted to announce, that the same was entirely out of their way of publication; but thought, however, that Messrs. C. and B. were the likeliest parties to purchase his copyright, as it was in their (the said Messrs. C. and B.'s) line of business:" while Messrs. C. and B., as agreeable and soft-spoken in their turn, perpetrating a serial continuation of bows, the least particular of which would not have disgraced the heir-apparent of a dancing-master, assured him, they were "exceedingly grateful for the polite preference he had given their house; but, at the same time, deeply lamented that the arrangements they had entered into, did not permit their treating with him for its publication," &c., &c., and &c., &c.

So were he and his unanimously rejected by those very publishers who, at the self-same moment, were immorally giving—I may say so advisedly—hundreds and thousands for the copyrights of lordlings' and ladies' libertine chronicles and sickly sentimentalities; and were, assisted by a depraved public, and a bribed congenial press, bringing out, in weekly and monthly doses of poison, the criminal conversations, and murders, and massacres, of the gallows and the gaol, and the fetid outscourings and slang *patois* of the gin-palace, the saloon, the coach-stand, and the fives-court—Newgate and St. Giles's productions which will do, and have done, more to lower the standard of literary excellence in this country, than years of the best authorship may suffice to upraise again.

But to return to the author-hero of my piece. Cut to his soul's soul, and worn to a shadow, he began, as his daily means decreased, to see the horrors of his fate in prospective. A few days and then came those horrors in reality. His money gone, and unable to pay the small sum owing for his rent, he was, according to the most esteemed custom of the world, turned out, with abuse, from the wretched hovel where he had latterly taken up his abode.—He wandered in the streets: but in vain he attempted to beg a small pittance to procure him his daily bread; for his miserable appearance and wan looks had already excited the watchful rancour of the police, one of whom, whenever he stopped to rest his weary and famished body, or look for commiseration from the eyes of the passers-by, like the spectre in the German tale, was behind, continually propelling and driving him onwards; and roughly, savagely pushing, nay, striking his poor, emaciated person with his hard and brutal truncheon, if, at any time, through exhaustion, he fell down. Day after day, and night after night, onwards and onwards, he was compelled to stalk, amidst the riot, glare, and excesses of a great and overgrown metropolis, like one who, for some horrible offence committed in his by-gone days of prosperity, had been destined, by the inexorable fiat of a god, never to know rest, but to churn the frothy cream of hungry madness, and walk himself foodless to death, till his poor flesh melted from the creaking bones!

Another day!—and yet still, by church-going Christians, in a church-going Christian country, might this poor wretch be seen, the mere outline of a shade—a living anatomic—houseless—foodless—helpless—hopeless—and almost naked, dragging his shrunken limbs in agony along the gaudy, glittering thoroughfares of London; at one time, his misery libelled by the laugh of the heartless, the joyousness of the gay, and the jeer of the brutal; and, at another, his eyes, once the throned seats of severe and beautiful genius, but now sunken, bloodful, and wolflike, mocked with the speculation of heaps of superfluous and luxurious provisions—a morsel of which might have preserved his life—two morsels have smoothed the sharp-cutting edge of famine's gnawing tooth; but the selfish immorality of society forbade the gift! To beg for it was, under the

present laws, unlawful, a crime\*—to take it—tortured as he was by the stings of the serpent want, he would have died first!—and he did die, as you will see presently.

Then came the too common rehearsal, nowadays, of the pauper's bitter farce and fate: dragged before a magistrate for the heinous crime of poverty—sent to the "Union" poor-house—admitted into its shameful precincts—and, in five minutes afterwards, thrust out at the back door by the ruthless and ruddy officials—not, however, without being proffered the usual relief of threats and curses, and a recommendatory intimation to take, at his earliest convenience, the water at one of the bridges, and not come "robbing the parish"—(subaudi *officers*).

It was one cold, gusty, bitter night, destined by the gracious benevolence of the Creator, to be the last of his wretched existence, that he stole, like a sheeted spectre, only less joyous, to seek not fire—not food—not clothing—not shelter—not friends—but what is often more acceptable to the destitute and broken-heart—a place to die in, where he might turn his pale face to the wall of some grand, great house of fashion, and die! The policeman, somehow or other, that night was absent from his beat, as policemen sometimes are, and so, with something like hope—the wretch's hope of shortly expiating his agonies, and *criminal acts of poverty*, in peace—that peace which the world would not give—this ill-used object, faint, feverish, painful, dying, tottered into one of the *ton*-inhabited squares of the west-end, and sank down on a step, his bones rattling as he did so, like the bleached anatomy of a murderer on the tree.—There he lay—a madness seized him, and terrible—revolting was the paroxysm—he tore—he fastened his teeth on his own flesh—no, his bones—but blood there came none—not a drop to quench his famishing thirst!—not a drop to moisten his yellow, furred, and arid tongue!—Burning, dreadful was his agony!—He gasped—he sickened—his cadaverous, ghostly face paled more ghastly—his jaw dropped—his eyes, like red balls of flame, started from their sockets—and the next instant a sensation of feeling came o'er him—he wept.—Could his poor mother, dear wife, and child, see him now—see him thus! and had all his high hopes, cherished so early and so long, of being—

—————remembered in his line,  
With his land's language,

come to this? The thought was torture greater than his bodily sufferings: he sighed piteously, he groaned in anguish of spirit—then came a chill—a pain at his heart—a film o'er his eyes—a choking in the throat—a brief struggle, brief as the dove's when in the ospray's talons—and the agonies of death were passed, and his persecuted spirit had ascended to those blessed spheres, where, it is to be hoped, all distinction between rich and poor ends—except in favour of the latter.†

\* There is little doubt, that after a bit, if their march of tyranny be not stopped by impeachment and *something sharp*, the Whigs will be for putting in force, with a little *extra severity*, "by way of rider," the 27th of Henry VIII. against the miserable poor, who, they are determined, shall neither dig nor beg, which 27 of Harry the Wife-killer, considerably intimates, that those "found begging a second time are to be whipped, and have the gristle of their right ear cut off; and for a third offence to suffer death." Or perhaps Edward VI.'s enactment might suit their adoption, which orders a beggar, if convicted before two Justices, on the testimony of two witnesses, to be branded with the letter V (not Victoria), and condemned to be a slave to the person who brought and presented him.

† To think of death happening in the streets when so much money is constantly being squandered in the pomp and pride and pettiness of the court, camp, church, and state! The other day the papers proclaimed that a peacock, adorned with jewels to the amount of £30,000, had been given to the Princess Royal, for a *plaything*! The *Devizes Gazette*, too, of Jan., 1841, pronounces that 140 hogsheads of strong beer are used per month at the Palace! Well,—indeed, well—might an enraged operative sometime ago, speaking of the extravagant grant of £70,000 for the Queen's stables, say, "If her Majesty wanted exercise, he would tell her how she might get more exercise for 7d. than for £70,000. Let her send one of the



But to conclude this too melancholy history, and to wish it were an uncommon one—to hope it may be the last!—his cold corpse lay for several hours, like a dead rat, unnoticed, except by a vagrant truck-dog, which, almost as persecuted and famished as himself, had broken its chain and wandered. Yet so great was the instinct, I may say the humanity, of this poor beast, that though gaunt and ravenous with hunger, it did not molest the stiffened remains, but calmly crouched by their side, and licked the dirt off them gently with its tongue. It was sometime after, a party returning from the revel halls of pleasure, shouting and singing, and full of wine and laughter, discovered the cold and cruelly-neglected remains of the ill-fated author, whose name, if success had crowned his endeavours—for he possessed the talents—might have been handed down to posterity as one of the laurelled songsters of his day: but alas! the reverse and its consequences!

Sinking their voices of riot gradually, the reeling party stopped, and found his body guarded by the affectionate and sympathising brute. It was a study for an artist to behold that group of dissolute, drunken men in the front ground, gaping with tipsy gravity, and dim and muddy gaze, at the body as it lay on the bier of a hard, cold step, watched and waked, as it were, by a lean, grisly tike, with a fierce-burning eye, and a mouth of teeth whiter than ivory! I have said it was a study—but it was more; it was a moral lesson—a dumb animal, though almost rabid with hunger—a four-legged brute teaching two-legged brutes—humanity!

To die of destitution in the public streets!—to die of destitution in the public streets!—Such a barbarous—such a heartless catastrophe to occur in a Christian nation—to be permitted to occur, when every newspaper is teeming with subscriptions for building churches—for building temples of stone when God's *living* temples are perishing daily!—and meek ministers of religion and crafty ones of policy have countless thousands a-year—and the keep of hounds and horses and other beasts of game, of sport, and of spectacle, costs countless coin—and the meretricious shakes and thrills of the scarlet women of Italian song are paid with showers of gold!

To die of destitution in the public streets! What a fate! What a farce on the vaunted profusion of public and private charities! What a mockery!—rather, what a *murder*!—a murder perpetrated, under the most aggravated circumstances, by the hard-hearted hypocrisy of society—by several thousands of the finest villains in the world,—men and women—gentlemen and ladies!—But I must curb my feelings—indignant heart, be still.

To proceed with the spectacle of the drunkards, the dog, and the dead body. Who, in that dead body—that wasted, starved, abused heap of mortality—that mere bundle of rags and bones—lying, like some obnoxious reptile, bereft of life, on the cold, cold stones of London streets—not one to close his staring eyes—not one to adjust his shattered remains—a poor, half-famished dog his only mute—midnight, dressed in its garb of sable, dismal clouds, his only—his chief mourner:—who, I say, in that deserted corpse, so unwatched, unwept, unmourned, so unbefriended, could have recognized the gifted, generous, enthusiastic, noble, lovely-minded spirit—once wishing—once worthy to associate with angels, graceful loves, fine sympathies, exquisite feelings, sweet music, thoughts pure as flowers, and ambition more beautiful than virtue—once so—and now thus!—Good God! why are such things! why should such things be! Alas! alas!

The midnight roysterers attempted to approach the body—the dog growled: they attempted to soothe and caress him, but he only exhibited significantly his row of white and glittering teeth, and would not allow their advances. All their efforts being in vain to dislodge or decoy the faithful animal from his self-ladies of her bedchamber, whom she was so fond of, to a toy-shop and buy a sixpenny skipping-rope, the other penny would buy a birch!”



assumed position, as chief and only protector of the relies of the ill-starred, destitute author, they called the police; but such was the determined fidelity of the poor brute, that he suffered himself, though a far superior animal, to be dispatched with the blow of a policeman's truncheon, ere he would allow them to approach the body. Poor beast! worthier, nobler than millions of those who, in mockery, *dare* to call themselves Christians—Christians, indeed!—Criminals rather—Cannibals, who dress like coxcombs and live in cities—polished and painted hyenas who bow and smile, but murder as they smile!

They succeeded in raising (for it was not very weighty—the bodies of the friendless, poor, and wretched seldom are—look for that in the “cold meat” of Kings and great Lords) the emaciated corpse of the ill-fated sufferer from the step on which he had expired; and, as a curious coincidence, and to mark the contrast, at the same time the officials were thus employed outside, the servants within the house, on whose threshold the shocking and revolting occurrence had taken place, were, also, upraising the dead (*drunk*) body of Mr. Commissioner ———, from the floor of his well-carpeted study, wherein, with the congenial abandonment so natural to Poor-Law Commissioners, he had retired some four hours before, to ruminate o'er his slaughter “orders,” and untender “tenders” of “sticking-pieces” of beef, flour “best seconds,” coffins “of three-quarters-of-an-inch thick,” “men's jackets of strong, fear-nought cloth,” “petticoats of linsey-woolsey,” “gogram gowns,” &c.,—and imbibe (of which he had managed to do three bottles and a-half) champagne in tumblers.

Such is life! Death in the streets too often happens when waste and debauchery are in the houses thereof.

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### AN INVOCATION

ADDRESSED TO THE POETS AND AUTHORS OF ENGLAND, EXCITING THEM TO  
EXPOSE THE CRUELITIES OF THE NEW POOR-LAW, BOTH IN PROSE AND VERSE.

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“Sed omnes illacrymabiles  
Urgentur ignotique longa  
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.”—HORACE.

“Authors of England, why are ye so slow?”—DON JUAN, JUNIOR.

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ELOQUENT AND GIFTED ONES!—It has caused much and sensible astonishment and regret, that among the many “*illustres anima*,” which belong to the realms of rhyme and kingdoms of triumphant prose of *genius's to-day in England*, none of you have as yet, or at least, in any material degree or length, touched upon that most fertile of all subjects, either for pathetic lay, high-wrought description, or indignant denunciation—the New Poor-Law.

I am the more surprised at this, as, independent of the heinous atrocity and shameful injustice of this enactment, which you must all be beware of in common with the unlettered, there never was, perhaps, a theme which afforded greater scope for the imagination, and a wider field for the descriptive powers, the intense and feeling pathos of the poet or author, than its melancholy *dénouements* and heart-rending catastrophes—those melancholy *dénouements* and heart-rending catastrophes—which, as the columns of the public papers show, are every day becoming more common and familiar to us.

Need I, viewing the measure with an author's eye, call your attentions to the aching—the piteous tableaux, which by the magic of the pen of genius, may be formed of the results of the Bastardy, Separation, and No-out-door-relief clauses? What a series of “sweet and bitter fancies,” may not be woven out of the consequences of such legislative barbarities! For the sake of exemplifica-

tion, take birth in the streets and death in the streets. To begin with the former :—

Look at the wan and blighted form of that young thing, once so beautiful !—once so happy !—her father's pet, her mother's blue-eyed girl !—sweet faded flower—

“ Ye who shall marvel when you hear her tale,  
Oh ! had you known her in her softer hour !”

houseless—foodless—sickening—piteous—unprotected !—the pangs and throes of child-birth upon her body, and the shame and gaze of the dissolute and depraved upon her face !—giving birth to the fruit of forbidden love—her babe of sin—in the public gas-lit streets, on the cold, hard, stony steps of some grand, fashionable house, wherein is heard, and resounds upon her agonized ear, the sound of feasting and of revelry—perhaps the abode of her serpentine seducer—of him who betrayed her young, her too trusting heart—(oh ! how she had loved him !)—to want—to wretchedness—to ignominy !

And now for death in the streets, a thesis equally revolting with the former, equally disgraceful to the powers that be. Behold that fleshless, sinking, famished being ; the living ghost of some poor author disregarded, or some good man ruined—once, perchance, the prosperous, respected dweller of a happy village where large blue-bells grew, or town of social comfort,—the favourite child, in better days, of his fond parents, long since departed, who used to dote upon him so !—and now thus ! I pray you, look upon him—

“ On him ! on him ! Look you how pale he glares !”

as the mockery of bread and meat in the surrounding shops everywhere enrages his parched and choking throat, and red and wolfish eyne—

“ God ! was thy earth by thee designed  
To feed, or famish human kind ?”

For three days and three nights in the Metropolis of moral—of religious—of church-building, charitable England—has that poor, forgotten outcast wandered, restless and alone, up and down the streets and thoroughfares—threatened if he asked for charity—rudely, brutishly thrust off, if at any time he attempted to sit on a step to rest his wearied body, by the ruthless official—his sole sustenance, beastlike, to lap with his yellow and furred tongue the neighbouring gutters ; and to contend with the truck-dogs for the sickening morsel and abominable offal\* of the dunghill and slaughterhouse. But soft ! he can endure his agonies no longer—he drags his famished carcass to the bridge of waters—delirium and despair, with maddening gesture, dance in his eyes—he attempts, again and again he attempts, to scale the parapet, but he has not the strength, for his is not the animal power of a child—he falls—he groans—the death-rattle is in his throat—and the hard stones are more charitable than his kind—they afford him death—death on a bridge at midnight ! for his bones (flesh, poor wretch ! he has none) are smashed and broken. And now he has expiated his horrible crime of poverty, is there none—not one,—to compose his abused corpse ? None—not one—to drive away that gaunt and hungry bull-dog who is craunching and growling o'er his poor limbs ?

\* \* \* \* \*

I am no orator—no intuitive master of breathing thoughts and burning words—eloquent and gifted ones ! like yourselves, but, as all know me, a plain and simple man. Nevertheless, in the foregoing sad examples, hastily dashed off in the indignation, the feeling of the moment, I have attempted, in my mediocre

\* Nowadays, alas ! to use the indignatory exclaim of Burke, “ horses and dogs (Prince Albert's among the number) eat the bread that ought to sustain the children of the people !” The number of horses now is at least 1,500,000, which, taking the food (grain) of each horse at that of eight men, which is the usual computation, would make the food raised for these animals, annually, in Great Britain, as much as would be required for twelve millions of men !—Vide *Alison's Principles of Population.*”



and quiet way, to exhibit how many heart-rending episodes, tales of deep pathos, and poems of high-wrought feeling, might, in the hands of the powerful and energetic, be composed from the materials for such designs, which, alas! the horrors of the New Poor-Law too plentifully, too frequently supply! In a word, if the suggestion should be attended to by one of the sons and daughters of genius, whom I have now the honour to address, how much sympathy for the oppressed might be awakened—how much indignation against the poor's oppressors might be excited—how much to point a moral and inculcate a useful, a warning lesson to the young and thoughtless of the lower ranks might be elicited! And then, what laurels might be obtained in a field, whose wide and extensive range has hitherto been uncultivated by the implements of prose or verse! And lastly, and better still, how much benevolence by the performance, might be achieved for humanity—how much to shame the official, and prevent the occurrence of such horrors as are hourly proceeding from such infamous edicts as the Bastardy, Separation, and No-out-door-relief clauses!

The spirit of song, as also the spirit of eloquence, can perform much: for, both in old and modern times, they have performed much; and, believe me, in this instance, incredible would be the advantages, should some of your gifted order work out my intimation, which would accrue to the cause of humanity, and to a helpless, suffering, and impiously-coerced population!

Such being the case, poets and poetesses, novelists and authors, leave off for a while inditing your love sonnets and metrical extravaganzas for the pages of some "trifle, some eightpenny matter." Suspend for a time your "fictiunculæ," descriptive of the unheard-of feats of some fashionable or unfashionable ruffian "about Turnbull-street; and your mimic histories, in three volumes, "de casibus virorum illustrium," in which, by the congenial assistance of Messrs. Colburn and Bentley, many of you manage to misuse the "Queen's press" most sadly—relinquish, I say, the portraiture of imaginary wrongs and fictitious sufferings, and turn your attentions and hearts to the present real and piteous ones of the poor.

Poets and poetesses of England—ye of the silver harps and trumpet breathings! to you I particularly address myself—for, to expose tyranny and oppression, and commiserate the helpless and suffering, has immemorially been your especial province. Arise! then, authoress of the "Golden Violet," and the "Improvisatrice"—gifted L.E.L.!\*—our isle's Sappho—

"The girl who gave to song  
What gold could never buy!"

and prepare to warble, to the melancholy sighings of your own soft-corded shell, the plaintive miseries of the poor. The Norton, too, that "brilliance feminine!"—she of the pathos intense and deep;—the pensive Stuart Wortley; Eliza Cooke, and the rest of tuneful women—not forgetting those more serious sisters of the lyre, Caroline Bowles† and Mary Howitt—be it yours to portray the pauper's sad history—his persecuted life and death of agony.

And now for the "grande Napoleons" of the realms of music: Be ready, Campbell, with your harp of liberty and fire, and scorch with flames melodious, 'till they squeal with torture, the fiendlike crew who live and fatten on human flesh, the vile commissionocracy and all their subaltern miscreancy. And you, *Blackwood*, or rather Wilson, the "rantin' dog, the daddie o't"—adjust your cutting shafts of castigation and poetic bolts of indignation, and, with soul and quill, war severely for the cause of suffering humanity and insulted justice, and lay (*for you can do it*) with your powerful eloquence, the "lickspittle" auto-cracy low!—

\* Since this was first published, alas! departed.

† Caroline Southey now.



"Where's calm Wordsworth and Montgomery?  
And classic Southey, where is he?  
Where chaste Rogers, the kind and free?  
And 'Fraser,' flower of irony?"

Spin them (the Broughamites), like cockchaffers, on the points of your exquisite sarcasm! And lastly, Sheffield's pride and bard severe, Ebenezer Elliott, you will surely not be slack—you, whom as one of the people, it touches so nearly—you, who of old, were so fond to season your "corn-law" poems with a love of liberty and stern justice—you know the people are on the abyss of universal degradation and ruthless extermination by this New Poor-Law—you, at least, I hope, will not be silent, but with the "sparkles dire" of your fierce, overwhelming song, light up in the eyes and hearts of all the land a call for vengeance on the Somerset-house slaughterers of the poor.

Once more, and yet once more, I invoke each and all—do not then slight my invocation—for in no cause could you touch your harps of silver sound more sweetly, and your trumpet tones more nobly, than in the cause of the helpless and oppressed!\*

I am, Eloquent and Gifted Ones!

Your most enthusiastic admirer,

September 2, 1837.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

## THE HEIGHT OF POLITICAL INGRATITUDE!

A FEW PLAIN SENTENCES ADDRESSED TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD BROUGHAM AND VAUX, ON HIS CREATION AND ADVOCACY OF THE DEMORALIZING, STARVING, POISONING, MURDERING, "PAINLESS EXTINCTION" NEW POOR-LAW.

"Oh! wretch without a tear, without a thought  
*Save joy above the ruin thou hast wrought!*  
The time shall come, not long remote, when thou  
Shalt feel *far more* than thou inflictest now:  
Feel for thy vile, self-loving self, in vain—  
And turn thee, howling, in *unpitied pain!*"—BYRON.

"——— If thou didst but consent  
To this most cruel *Act*, do but despair,  
And if thou would'st a cord, the smallest thread  
That ever spider twisted from her womb,  
Will serve to strangle thee; a rush will be  
A beam to hang thee on; or would'st thou drown thyself,  
Put but a little water in a spoon,  
And it shall be as all the ocean  
Enough to stifle such a villain up!"—KING JOHN.

MY LORD,—Of all men, in any age or clime, who have, by popular assistance and regard, raised themselves from obscurity—in your case, *merited* obscurity—to potentiality, titles, and a five-thousand-per-annum pension—your Lordship has, without a parallel, proved yourself the *most perfidious*, the *most ungrateful!*

\* Not only the "Bardie clan," but my "Lords and Gentlemen," might war gloriously in behalf of the rights and lives of their country's poor. But unfortunately charity does not begin at home with the great and high-born. They can expend their feelings and fees prodigally enough for foreign Poles and Greeks, but not for home-made widows and orphans, and distressed peasants and artisans of Britain! That they can do the former, the following paragraph, which appeared in the weekly press of April the 20th, 1839, will specify:—"It is said that the Duke of Devonshire meditates a journey into Abasia; that his Grace is enthusiastic in the extreme in favour of the insurgents of that country, so much so, indeed, that it was believed that he would devote his fortune to that cause."

The arts and sciences, too, which, as *plain Harry Brougham*, you used to obtain that potentiality, title, and five-thousand-per-annum pension—though (owing to the great excitement which pervaded the public mind, and the false and specious exhibitions of patriotic puissance on your part) they were not seen through at the time, were, as experience has since shown, most mean, despicable, designing, and cowardly. They were, my Lord, the arts and sciences, certainly, of a consummate and crafty disciple of the Machiavellian academy, but far from the ones which ought to have been resorted to by an honest and a respectable politician, much less by one who feigned delight in being designated the “man of the people.” The gulled, but generous people, however,—those people whom your Lordship has subsequently so infamously choked with the husks of “*coarser food*,” and so *successfully* massacred by poisoned broths and skillies—were too enthusiastic in their attachment for one whom they deemed the thing he appeared, to discriminate (*would that they had!*) between a wily, selfish demagogue, and a legitimate patriot. They have, howbeit, long since found out, and grievously, yea, with tears seven times salt, repented of their mistake!

But to progress:—You must be well aware, my Lord, that you achieved your present baronial coronet and its “*trimmings*” by agitation of the very worst description\*—an agitation exceedingly different to the anti-poor-law agitation of Oastler, Stephens, myself, and the rest. We seek, and have sought, to benefit our kind;—you, as succeeding events have substantiated, only sought to benefit yourself, and exterminate your poorer countrymen by a painful, or, as you designate it in your “*Marcus*” pamphlet†—for I have no doubt you were the author of it—a “painless extinction.”

The unprincipled agitation of yours, as you well know, comprised Judaslike fits and starts of alternate bewailing and beseeching, softening and irritating, and filling with false hopes and unfounded resentments the popular imagination; at one time, fulsomely lauding the would-be (though they *never were*) disinterested intentions of yourself and Downing-street deceivers, and plentifully expatiating on all the fine things you and they would do for the people—“legitimate source of all power!”—at another, like a “prophet in drink,” rancorously denouncing your opponents, the Tories, who injuriously, under the Castlereagh and Liverpool dynasties, as they certainly ruled, were ten thousand times honester as legislators, more humane, generally, as individuals; and, in their private lives, infinitely more respectable than you and your subordinate fiends, who still hold office, the sneak Russells and Magdalene Melbournes, have succeeded in proving themselves. But what cared you? Power you lusted for—the power, as it has since transpired, to perpetrate evil—to tyrannize, to poison,

\* Yes, in congenial partnership with Fitzwilliam, Baines, Son, and Company, by *inflaming* Nottingham and Bristol, by burning effigies of Bishops and statesmen, by issuing orders, “*We will pay no more taxes*,” by walking in procession with “the royal bloody axe” carried by the royal executioner, with his face covered with black crape, by putting on the red cap of liberty, by painting pictures of the King in petticoats, and the Queen in breeches, flogging her royal spouse’s bottom,” by “giving three groans for the Queen,” and by roaring, “*ore rotundo*” that “*Billy should come down, or the Bill should come up!*”—“*We will either have the Bill, or Billy’s head*,” &c., and, lastly, by hoping the days would come when “little boys might kick kings’ heads about the streets like footballs!”

† This infamous work was originally brought out at the close of 1838, without author’s or publisher’s name, printed in Black-horse-court, Fleet-lane, at 2s. per copy, but now one is not to be procured under (unless by chance or indirect means) £5; as it has been suppressed. If Lord Brougham *was not* the author of it, he certainly was in at the inditing of its matter. When Mr. Stephens taxed the Commissioners with its perpetration, Mr. Chadwick, as their legal adviser, declared that Mr. Nicholls, Mr. Lewis, and Mr. Lefevre were not, collectively or individually, the authors or author of the “Book.” To which Mr. Stephens replied, “there were other Commissioners, a score or two, besides these three, and then there were Mr. Chadwick himself, his patron Lord Brougham, and his bosom friend, Mr. Francis Place, and their ‘female assistant,’ Miss Martineau.” . . . I decidedly say ‘*Marcus*’ is, directly or indirectly, ‘*Vaux et pretere a nihil*.’



to grind to the dust, your poor and inoffensive brethren ! And you were, besides, *heinously unprovided* with money : for the yearly incoming from Brougham Hall, which your father, the *timber-merchant*, left you, inclusive of its kail-yard and bestial appertaining, was barely sufficient to supply your *brandy flask*, or Miss Brougham's slim ankles with silk stockings, much less defray the requisitions of an individual so notoriously profuse in his expenditure as yourself. So, to satisfy your extravagance, and your daughter's desire for silk hose, and to replenish the Cogniac pocket-pistol before alluded to, and, which, as 'tis said, you always carry about you, and which, by token, you made such exceeding good use of, during your memorable "situate and being" on the woolsack, you had recourse to the most vile, and, at the same time, the most Merry-Andrewish expedients.

The Duke of Wellington and his Ministry :—Good God !—how you did abuse them ! what high crimes and misdemeanours you did accuse them of !! Never were heard such hard, harsh, horrid names as you called them—the *mots d'usage* of Dan O'Connell, blackguard of blackguards as he is, are nuts and gingerbread—*mere tinkers' curses*—to what you then voiced and vented. 'Sdeath ! hanging wasn't too good for the members of the Wellington administration, nor assassination *too bad* !!! Nay, if my memory doesn't fail me, I believe you even went the *creditable* length of recommending such a summary course of proceeding to your, at that time (because they served your purpose), "esteemed good masters"—the populace ; and, on more than one occasion, were extremely *distinct and explicit* in narrating in the journal over which you were, at that period, the presiding and archdemon, the exact shape and size of the brickbats and pebble-stones, with which you did *strongly advise* such *justifiable manslaughter* to be consummated !

Yes, my Lord, for the filthy lucre of £5,000 a-year, and the power to torment poor wretches, and hear them shriek, you did so ; and, so having done, (glory to your possession of face !) continue, in your place in the "House," on every occasion, to flourish and vapour about Earl Stanhope's "dozen-Anti-Poor-Law Agitators," as you called them, inflaming the minds of the pauper population. Inflaming !! I like that idea vastly—particularly when I call to remembrance the sayings and doings of your reforming coadjutor "Swing"—with what unprecedented success he "inflamed," not only our minds, but our homes and our wheat-stacks too ! For God's sake, my Lord, bear *that* in mind, and, for the time to come, let us hear no more philippics against agitation or agitators—at least from your tongue !

Well, in continuation, (for you don't deserve that I should bate you an inch of exposure,) by holding up political expectations, which never could be realized, and squandering promises which have all long since been broken, you contrived, mounted on the shoulders of a good-natured and unsuspecting people (inclusive of their sailor sovereign) to acquire your present "bad eminence." And here to abbreviate the matter, let me ask how have you repaid them ? Certainly *not* by retailing, at sixpence per month, for their perusal, that pitiful compilation of "wise saws and modern instances," subtracted from *Moore's Almanac*, *Guy's Spelling-Book*, and *Whittington and his Cat*,—from the stale truisms of wisdom-men of Greece and Gotham, &c., &c.—which you call, with all modesty, the *Penny Magazine*. Certainly *not* by ludicrously *ratting* and *Jim Crowing*, as you do, fifty times every session, and uttering that infinite deal of nonsense and inimitable nothing, which, when published as the report of your "speech," *damns* the sale of every paper in which it is inserted. Certainly *not* by having sometime ago chronicled in this land of existing abuses, that sagacious *ipse dixit*, which subsequently soured you in the suds—"If little reform was obtained last session, *less* would be obtained in the next !" And most certainly *not* by having caused a cab-phaeton to be called after your nickname ; or



by cutting an elaborately accurate figure of fun in the public prints, in the latter end of 1839, as the contributor of your own violent death by a fatal coach accident!

How then, in reality, have you repaid the zealous and enthusiastic confidence of so trusting a people—a people to whom you owe your present exaltation, and from the sweat of whose brows and broken hearts, you pocket your unprecedented ex-chancelloric pension of £5,000 yearly? How have you repaid them?

Gracious heaven! where are thy thunderbolts! by framing an enactment to massacre in cold blood, and that, too, by the most execrating deaths, *i. e.*, by *famine, slow poisons, "painless extinctions"* (?) and broken hearts, the pauper population of this queendom—an enactment which has paved our streets with the bodies of murdered babes, and choked our rivers with the corrupted remains of their unfortunate mothers!

My Lord, you are clothed in your peer's robes—you have a seat among our hereditary legislators—you fare sumptuously every day—luxuries of every discovered kind are yours in great abundance—and I dare say you esteem it a great thing to be my Lord Brougham. Look here at what I shall make to pass before you, and if you have a heart, and then still continue *to think so*—then still continue, when Anti-New Poor-Law petitions are presented, and through your malicious instigation, rejected, to "grin horribly a ghastly smile," to think your famine-and-murder law shall be perpetuated—you are *cruel indeed*.

Now, ye hideous—ye ghostlike—ye heart-rending spectacles of the inhuman New Poor-Law, rise to view:—

See that young girl, who sits wretched and lonely on the step of that great, grand house—say your Lordship's, in Berkeley-square,—“pale as her smock,” her form as torn and shattered too!—her bright eyes dimmed, her fair hair neglected, her mild face the picture of despair!—and yet, poor thing, she is still a child, *quite a child*. But soft, why those piercing moans, those pangsful cries of suffering and of agony?—and why press round, in noisy, giddy haste, and with unholy, lascivious gaze, that thickening crowd? With modest, imploring eyes—oh, once so bright! and voice yet soft, though broken with pain, she bids them, as her shameful cheek burns with blushes, “*do go away!*” But they won't—and she, good God! in a Christian country,—a country on whose throne is sitting a youthful maiden,\* no one whiter fairer than herself—this child of lostness—an honest Englishman's daughter,—mark! the victim, fond and trusting, of some gay, fine-faced villain—perchance a Commissioner's son, or a lord of the bedchamber—this poor betrayed—oh! had you seen how innocent, how affectionate, how pretty, how playful a pet she was, ere the betrayer came—your eyes, “albeit not used to the melting mood,” would brew briny tears now! Yes, you would weep to see this delicate creature in the open air and staring street, without home, without food, without assistance, without protection—amidst the sneers of the depraved and the speculation of the dissolute, giving birth to the offspring of her shame, her sin, her sorrow.†

\* Queen Victoria, you know (for you are not now England's maiden Queen), what the pangs of child-birth are, what they are even when surrounded with the first skill and dearest care; think, then, what your poor female subjects must endure from these self-same pangs, happening, as they too often do, under the operation of the New Poor-Law, in the open air, city streets, and lonely fields and ditches, and issue your royal commands that a law, which produces such unnatural accidents, shall be repealed. Do so. But there, I am asking you to become a nursing mother to your people when *you do not suckle your own child!*

† Births in the street, since the introduction of the New Poor-Law, have too frequently occurred. As recently as Nov. 5, 1840, an instance is reported.—“Yesterday morning, a woman, respectably dressed, was observed passing down Francis-street, Tottenham-court-road, apparently in a state of great exhaustion. She was observed to stoop, and on further observation it was discovered that she had deposited the body of a newborn infant. Pursuit was instantly made, and the miserable creature confessed that she had delivered herself yesterday morning, at about seven o'clock, in the Regent's-park.”—*Times*, Nov. 6, 1840.

My Lord, *I* am but a poor devil of an author—simple G. R. Wythen Baxter—and *you* are a puissant baron, and possess a baron's broad lands and broad pieces of gold and silver—neither of which *do I*:—but *I* pray you mark the foregoing too common New Poor-Law *tableau* well—and then preach in the senate—reason with despair, but say not, for the love of truth, say not, the “Act” works *wonderfully well!* But stay—turn your eyes here:—

Lo! that aged couple with heads of frost—

“John Anderson, my joe, John, we clamb the hill together,  
And mony a canty day, John, we’ve had wi’ ane anither!”

They were lovers even when children, and joined together by holy church when very young. They have since waded through life's barren waste in company, plucked for each other its few flowers as nosegays, and borne affectionately the infliction of its many thorns, each having been a solace, a rallying point to each. From their youth up, till now, to beg they have been ashamed, to dig they have not refused. They have brought up and provided for their children in honesty and sobriety. They have, though sorely stricken, bowed without murmuring to the dispensations of their God, and stood over those children's graves! They have done this, and yet not swerved from their path of duty; but old age, with its body-guard of infirmities, will sap the strongest frames—it has theirs;—and, although the heart is willing, *the flesh is weak*, and they can work no longer! And must they, through time and nature's circumstances, which they cannot control—must they look no more wistfully in each other's old faces?—hear no longer one another's cheery, familiar voices?—Must they be separated? The law of God *emphatically* proclaims, *No!* But what says the law of the Somerset-house men? Hark! to that shrill shriek—those feeble voices lisping in second childhood, for *mercy—not—not to part them!* But when did the Commissioners' appointed hounds of blood ever listen to entreaty, or give way to pity? If they were to do so, they would be *instantly dismissed!* In vain, therefore, the aged, tottering twain asseverate—that “they have committed no crime”—“they cannot help their poverty.” In vain their cries—in vain their hoary hair cumpers the ground like snow—they are ruthlessly torn, with brutish jeers and laughter, from each other for ever!

Here, my Lord, “heroic, stoic, and sententious,” as you are, let me inquire, how would you and my Lady Brougham like to be thus unceremoniously treated? For my own part, I can only say, if any of the Somerset-house gang shall attempt liberties with me and my pretty one, let them beware! I have a brace of Joe Manton's “flutes,” which seldom (errors excepted) miss their aim. Again, however, to pursue my sad authorship. Here, Albert, Duke of Saxe, Field-Marshal, and our Queen's husband, who, sometime ago, dressed in the fashionable millinery of the review, went about praising the Act—and your Majesty, Adelaide, the Queen Dowager,—and you, too, iron chief of Waterloo, who have re-echoed the Albert rondo of the New Poor-Law's blessings—be you all spectators here!

Behold that abused, famished wretch! There are hundreds such to be seen in every market-town. He is a perfect living skeleton—a moving body of death. You may count his ribs, one by one, like a harp's strings. There is not a bone in his frame, but which is as plainly developed as a surgeon's anatomical cast. What does he out of the churchyard? How came he thus? What heinous abomination has he perpetrated to bring him to this lowest hell of misery, to be left to rot and fester by his kind? Was it theft? Was it murder? No; it was something which our present upright legislators esteem an infinitely *greater atrocity*, and visit with tenfold more severity—I mean POVERTY!

This poor man, my Lord, has seen better days and happier hours, but misfortune's too frequent visitations, and the Queen's tax-gatherer calling *so often*, conspired to make his humble home desolate, and him the grisly outcast that



you see!\* He was not an idle, or a vicious man; nor did he desire to live on the labour of others, as *the manner of too many is*. He therefore came up to London in the expectation of obtaining of his brother-workmen permission to toil; but that great favour could not be granted. He then, though he felt ashamed, attempted to beg a small pittance of the charitable; from that, however, he was somewhat roughly told by an official, to desist; and the "*treadmill*" and "*hard labour*" were held up as the rewards of his importunity. Now *hard labour* was *what* he desired; but the "*treadmill*"—that hurt his pride: for, though "my Lords and Gentlemen" may sneer, still, notwithstanding he was verging on the gaunt cliff of starvation, he retained a little of the right honest sort of that feeling in his bosom. Such being the case, what could he do? He was too honest to steal, for he had some old-fashioned notions from his father's Bible on that head; so, as you will see presently, (he was graciously, in this land of liberty, *allowed to do that*) he starved!

Ill-fated being! day after day, and night after night, he has stalked, like a fleshless spectre, up and down the streets of the richest capital in the world, not daring to ask for, much less to take, a morsel of the bread and meat which are everywhere abundantly piled up, and which the Lord has expressly commanded should be given,—“From him that is hungry, turn thou not away!” But not to dwell on his sad misery:—It is night—his last night is come! for the offal of the slaughterhouses and dunghills—his only sustenance for many a day—has failed! the dogs, with whom he was wont to battle for its fetid possession, having eaten it all up, he being *too weak* to drive them away. What can he do? The wolf hunger is tearing up his entrails, his mouth is as parched as an arid waste—his tongue cleaves to his jaws—his bloodshot and fiery eyes glare strange and dreadful—madness comes over him—he fastens on his own arm, but his greedy teeth craunch only the bone—for flesh he has none.† The disappointed spirit of famine howls within him—he can no more—but with delirious fury dashes himself against the hard stones—and dies—dies in unconceivable torments, like a rabid hound, in the midnight lonely streets.‡

\* \* \* \* \*

\* Here, my Lord Brougham, or *Brute*, for popular indignation has long since apostrophized you by the latter more *appropriate* designation; these, thou cruel sallow lawyer, are thy doings!—the doings with which thou hast recompensed the generous but imprudent people, who gifted thee with fortune, title, power§—the power which, fiendlike, thou hast nightly

\* It has been ascertained that the labouring man pays, indirectly, annually in taxes, £11 7s. 7d. out of his wages of £22 10s.

† The surgeon's description of the body of the woman Friry, who died of starvation through the neglect of the New Poor-Law officials, on Monday, the 12th of October, 1840, at Kensington, was, “*The body was little more than bone and integument. I never saw a body so emaciated.*”

‡ My noble friend Oastler, speaking of this *tableau* in a letter to me, dated from No. 8, Rawstone-street, Brompton; Christmas-day, 1839, says, “Yes, sure enough, I remember your awful picture of destitution—who, having read it, can forget it?” This letter to Lord Brougham has been copied into almost every paper in the North of England, and into several London papers. It appeared originally in the *Charter*, August 18, 1839, *Sheffield Iris* of Nov. 5, 1839, and *Northern Star* of Nov. 9, 1839.

§ Brougham's origin is the lowest of the low; he was originally a poor lad, born in one of the wynds of the Cowgate, Edinburgh, which are well-known to be the most vile and filthy festering sinks of corruption, crime, debauchery, and wretchedness, in all that ancient cesspool of nastiness, now, forsooth, called the *Modern Athens*. In this respect of indifferent daddyhood and mammyhood, his now-lordship strictly resembles the present M.P. for Leeds, Edward Baines, “who,” says Mr. Roberts, of Sheffield, in his pamphlet to Dr. Pye Smith, “when he first arrived at Leeds, was a roving printer, with his wardrobe and his stock in trade, suspended on a stick across his shoulder!” He, too, like the *gamin* of the Cowgate, is to be made a peer as soon as a sufficient number of paupers have been massacred in the Union workhouses, and a *Member of the National Institute of France*, of course.



used in that house of ill-fame, the House of Lords, to traduce and oppress them, and their real friends—that fine fellow Oastler and the good Stephens.\* But beware, ingrate! Trust not too far an outraged—a barbarously coerced nation's forbearance. Hitherto they have allowed thee—*yea, even thee*—to run riot in thy cruelty and injustice—but the dominion of thy Bastile “coarser food” statute is shaken—already it totters, and when it falls, great will be the fall thereof—signal the retribution which will await its accursed framers and supporters;† and when that period arrives, as assuredly it will arrive, sooner or later (for God and man are determined to bear its horrible outrages no longer), think not thy long-winded harangues of *no party* and *no sense*—or the assistance of thy “brandy, laudanum, and double allowance of jaw,” will shelter thy degraded carcass from the points and hisses of indignant, burning scorn—and *something worse*, which will everywhere greet it.‡

I am, my Lord,

With the greatest disgust for your inhuman heart, and political ingratitude,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

June, 1839.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

P. S.—In the foregoing, I think, I have exhibited very neatly the precise manner in which your Lordship, at the cuckoo times of the Reform Bill, managed to “grease *the seat* of your breeches” with oil of blatherumskite, and afterwards, like the Yankee-doodle, slid down on a rainbow of party-coloured statements of your own manufacture into a snug berth of place and pension.

But if you, my Lord, should desire to know *what more* I think of your Lordship, than I have in this communication set down for your perusal, I beg

\* If Oastler and Stephens had done nothing more for their countrymen and kind than to figure in the following paragraph, it would have been sufficient to render their names famous and blessed:—

“NEW POOR-LAW.—A public meeting was held in the Town Hall, Staleybridge, on Monday evening last, to remonstrate with the House of Commons on the above enactment, and to demand that Messrs. Oastler, Stephens, O'Connor, Bull, Condry, O'Brien, and Cobbett, be heard at the bar, on behalf of the people of England, against that infamous statute.”—*Leeds Paper*, June 2, 1838.

† Since the passing of the “Act” all fear of God, and honour of king, magistrate, ruler and lord, “pastor and master,” have been violently wrenched from the hearts of the lower orders. They have now no innate moral sense of obligation or obedience “to shield them,” to use the words of the Rev. Edward Duncombe's pamphlet, “from the workings and declamatory appeals of Tertullian orators in the day of future danger: what hold do landlords retain on their affections to make such poor as these proof against the suggestions of the rebellious and discontented: do they trust to the clergy? what can we say—the poor tell us, that it is now all the same to them under what constitution they live: they tell us now that they have no longer a law to appeal to—that even some of our Bishops have thought fit to consign their rights to the discretion of Commissioners.”

‡ The Whig Bishop of Norwich and *chaplain in ordinary* to the Poor-Law Commissioners, came (and served him right) in for a little retributory *tit* of hiss and groans for his *tat* in being so enamoured of the New Poor-Law, at a meeting at Norwich, which he attended for the purpose of forming a *humbug* “Norfolk and Norwich Auxiliary Society for the Suppression of the Slave-trade, and the Civilization of Africa.” This gathering took place Nov. 18, 1840, and while his Whig-Father-in-Godship was vapouring on the necessity of all bodies becoming, without loss of watch, Wilberforces in our foreign relations with Africa, he was neatly taken down by the immediate offspring of his *own dear, dainty* New Poor-Law, the Chartists, who had attended for the purpose, telling him, in full chorus, with groaning accompaniments, “to look at slavery at home,” “to go to the workhouses and factories,” and other useful intimations, which it would be well for him to attend to before he again comes out as a barrister for the blacks. At this same meeting a well-tongued operative of the name of Dover, after passing several *deserved* compliments on the public and private amiability of the aforesaid *pauper-loving* prelate, ended so:—“It would be well to point out the inconsistency of the Bishop who spoke to-day. Why, last week he had presided at a Temperance Meeting, and the next day had taken his share at a wine party!” Egad, the patrons of the New Poor-Law must expect such sweetmeats when they publicly attempt to play at Temperance, Slavery (foreign and far off, of course), Loyalty, Corn-Laws, No Tithes, No Popery, &c., and such like *games* of political *pam*. I should say that the skilful Bishop won't want to come out as a “saint in crape”—in NORWICH CRAPE—for some time again!

to refer you to a former *complimentary* letter of mine, directed to your Brougham and Vauxship, which appeared sometime ago in the *Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, and several other papers. In my "*Don Juan, Junior*," recently published, too, I have taken especial care to say some very *nice things* of you.—G. R. W. B.

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## A LETTER TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

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Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?

Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

Randolph! thy wreath hath lost a rose.—WALTER SCOTT.

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MY LORD DUKE,—These days we live in are not only, in the highest degree, the days of tergiversation, but they are also equally eminent for *several distinguished* (*notorious*, perhaps, had been a *better term*) characters becoming, either through infatuation, or by their own endeavours, very small ones.

Several instances of this curious, unaccountable, counter-deification or unapotheosing might be adduced. I, however, shall content myself by recapitulating the case of a *certain baronet*, who, as your Grace well knows, from his youth upwards till very, *very* recently, was all agog for those naughty sweet-meats—suffrage, ballot, annual parliaments, &c.; but when years, grey hairs, incapacity, *no preferment*, and title therefrom accrued—hey, presto! he suddenly wheeled to the rightabout—swallowed his former contraband opinions with his spittle; and became, at least so he loudly persists to this moment—a thorough church-and-Queen-man. Now, which part, politically speaking, of this gentleman's life future historians will adjudge the best, I don't pretend to say. I think, however, every one, except *those concerned*, will allow that—either in his nonage or dotage, he has made a most respectable fool of himself!

I see your Grace's lip curve with the smallest perceptible smile imaginable, at my thrusting my tongue in my cheek at Sir Francis. My Lord Duke, curb that smile—unless you would have the worthy baronet return you it in kind; for your Grace, equally with him, only in a *more suicidal manner*, has destroyed and tarnished, in the last years of your life, the laurels of your former renown! "How so?" you inquire, with the frank and soldierlike expression of bygone days. I will inform your Grace, and that bluntly; for these are not the times for compliment:—simply, then, by your advocacy of that "base, brutal, and bloody" statute, the New Poor-Law.

And 'tis of your advocacy of that abominable enactment which I have now to speak. Seriously then, my Lord Duke, to come to the point with an argument *ad hominem*—or rather, in your Grace's case, *ad famam*—to your own fame, which, I presume, is of some consequence to you. Only think how badly it will sound in the ears of posterity, that the "*great captain of the age*," the *humbler of the fierce eagles of the bravest of the brave—the acknowledged saviour of Europe*—and *receiver-general* of "great pensions and much praise," (which were never *grudged*, or esteemed undeserved, *except by the Whigs*)—that this glorious hero, in his latter days, sank, *morally sank*, so low as to enter into partnership with the inmates of those dastard slaughter-houses, Downing-street and Somerset-house, to exterminate, by the slow agonies of hunger and other "painless extinction" cruelties, which make humanity shudder, his unfortunate and poorer countrymen; many of whom fought with him at Waterloo, and the wives and families of many who in that battle-field, "foremost fighting fell!"

Only think, I repeat, of such a stigma remaining on your character—and



your future biographers' comments upon it!—And what will those comments be?—What! but that the Duke of Wellington, *malgré* his many pensions, titles, orders, and victories, was of a *most cruel and heartless disposition*—that, when he could no longer massacre his foreign neighbours abroad, *to keep his hand in play*, and satisfy his lust for blood, he entered into a compact with the most diabolical miscreants, to murder and butcher his own countrymen at home!

Such will doubtless be the character that the future Humes and Southey's will afford your Grace. And then, ringing many sarcastic changes on your latter years, what will they not say of the degraded position of the "Great Duke," who publicly, in his place in Parliament,\* *gratuitously* instituted himself the panegyrist of the most fiendish "Act," of a most fiendish set of men—the *very same set of men*, who, not long before, openly advertized the size, shape, and dimensions of the brickbats, cabbage-stalks, dead cats, ditto dogs, &c., &c., with which they *expressly recommended* him to be pelted—and with which he duly was—and at the same time, directed (which was, also, duly performed), his windows to be smashed to pieces, while his Duchess was heaving her parting sigh and dying groan in the house!†

My Lord Duke, forgiveness of injuries certainly becomes a conqueror—but the forgetfulness of such indignities as were heaped upon your head and upon your party, at the time of the Reform humbug—to forget such—particularly when the motive for doing so is not *noble*, partakes more of the base submission of a caiff, than the true oblivion of a hero; and your having done so,—

"Like some other things won't do to tell

Upon your tomb, in Westminster's old Abbey!"

But to proceed:—Honour, your Grace, is a great thing—a dukedom is a great thing—a good pension, too, from the public purse, is perhaps as *great as either*—but humanity is *better* than all! Instead, therefore, of patronising the miscreants who introduced, like a pest, the enactment which has and will depopulate these realms, it was *your place* to have seen, and materially, as a patriot and good man, to have expedited, that the framers and promoters of it, should be led, amidst the execrations of a justly infuriated people, to that *high tree*, the gallows, whence the felon's dance prevents any further repetition of his crimes! It was *yours*,—as a true and Christian hero is always humane—to have volunteered your services, to head the opposition against that spawn of hell, the New Poor-Law, and not have coalesced, as you did, and get *tyrannically clapped for it*, with the blood-stained Brougham, and the lascivious, cruel Melbourne, to Billingsgate and cough down that excellent nobleman, Earl Stanhope, when in the act (*quite as meritorious, as leading men to be shot and sabred at Waterloo*) of interceding for the lives and liberties of his suffering and barbarously-massacred countrymen!‡

\* The Duke sometime ago so far *morally degraded* himself, as to bandy compliments with Viscount Melbourne on the *excellent working* of the New Poor-Law in the agricultural districts.

† Matter of history and *hiss—tory*. Brougham, Melbourne, and John Russell's *paid mob* attacked, and broke the windows of Apsley-house, during the Reform rebellion, the Duchess of Wellington at the time being on her *dying bed*!

‡ This excellent nobleman has not only been uniformly treated with the greatest discourtesy and insult when advocating the cause of humanity in the House of Lords, but, on several occasions, his statements, descriptive of the starvation or the murders of his poorer brethren, have been considered only worthy of jeers and laughter. Take an instance, May the 1st, 1838, when the majority of the lords temporal and spiritual, resolved themselves into an assembly of *two-legged hyenas*:—

"Earl Stanhope said, in the event of a Committee's being appointed to inquire into the working of the New Poor-Law, he would produce before it more cases of the cruel, unconstitutional, and unchristian working of the 'Act,' than the House could get through in a session. (A laugh.) One of these was that of a man who killed himself in consequence of the treatment he received in the workhouse. A coroner's jury brought in a verdict of temporary insanity, but it ought to have been wilful murder against the oppressors of the poor, who drove the man insane. (Laughter.) Another was that of a young girl who was flogged like a soldier." (Laughter.)

Again, it should have been *yours*, instead of joining in the interested and prejudiced cry against such benevolent individuals, as Oastler, Fielden, Stephens, &c.—England hath few worthier sons than they!—to have *succoured* and *upheld* them in their humane and patriotic endeavours—yes! your commendation ought to have been their support!

My Lord Duke, *all these things* you *ought* to have done, out of regard to your own character—out of feelings of humanity—out of *gratitude* for the immense and *unparalleled* yearly national allowance you receive, and out of justice to your country, and to the brave soldiers whom you have so often led to victory, but not to wealth—many—*too many* of whose wives and families are *now rotting* in the Union Bastiles, or have starved—nay, alas! have died in the very streets!!\*

So it *behoved* you to have acted—but what a signal falling off! How did you act? Shame, shame! Where was your humanity—where your Christianity—where your honour?—but, alas! Honour is not the hero of the present age! You not only chronicled your vote (if you had remained *silent*, it would have been something), but in your place, in the House of Lords, complimented—*fulsomely complimented* Earl Melbourne, on the *excellent* (?) *working* of the new Act—and thereby afforded the loan of your illustrious name to the advocates of that abominable measure—as “thus saith the Duke”—“thus hath the Duke inferred,” as an excuse for the continued perpetration of their horrid cruelties. Yes, *you*, the Duke of Wellington, of Ciudad \* Rodrigo, of Vittoria—the Prince of Waterloo, with a hundred orders of knighthood glittering on your bosom, *condescended* to eulogise the slight and unmerited leader of a faction—the *sneers* of whose polluted lips have always been grinned at your expense, or your party's—and whose official pensions are earned by the promulgating of falsehood at your cost. *You*, a proud man—a brave man—famed for your firmness and honourable integrity—*you* did this thing—*you*, who, if Parliamentary reports are not as false as modern politicians, while the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill was in passage through the House, strenuously opposed it (particularly the Bastardy, Separation, and the Unconstitutional Power vested in the Commissioners' clauses) in good set terms!!

Nay, some still affirm, that in secret, you yet retain your first unfavourable impressions of the infamous “boon.” To do so, and not *openly to express your abhorrence*—fie! is that honourable? In a word, does it become the man, whom the haughty and almost superhuman Corsican attempted, but in vain, to overcome; the warrior, whose victorious conduct forced even his vanquished enemies, the French, to designate him, *Le bon, le brave Wellington*,” “*Le Turenne Anglais*.” If these Frenchmen saw the inside of some of our horrid Unions, would they compliment you so now?

To exculpate your Grace from the *invidious course* you have pursued with regard to the New Poor-Law, is impossible. It is reported that your reason for acting as you have done, was to avoid the *creation of a division* in the Conservative camp; in short, not to *offend Peel*. Whether this impotent excuse for active inhumanity has your authority for its promulgation, I know not; at any rate, it is a very unsatisfactory one, and not at all what it befits your Grace to give, in defence for being instrumental in the wholesale slaughter of your poor countrymen. What! turn your back on Humanity, Christianity, and Justice, all to please Peel!!!

And here, with your Grace's permission, a word about *that gentleman*. Now, I must candidly tell you, that I *do not like that man Peel*, and that a great many besides—ay, even among those calling themselves Conservatives, *do not either*. Insomuch as he has, on several memorable occasions, to say the least

\* *Vide* a file of any newspaper since the introduction of the “Act.” Some folk may cry “*humbug*” to this, as they did to Mr. Whittle Harvey in the House when detailing the atrocities of the “Boon,” Feb. 20, 1838—they may—but such things are too true—alas!



of it, shown himself a most unprincipled *Rat*, and that to the manifest detriment of his party. Indeed, his father's jennies, by whose revolutions he obtained his present station of potentiality and wealth, did not revolve *more quickly* than he has on divers questions of vital importance. He is not a *staunch man*. Trust me, such being his character, he is not a politician who ought to *lead* you—he is only constituted to *follow*. Your life has had “some smatch of honour in it”—let not, therefore, the last days of it, if you are wise, be *jeopardized* by the sequence, at heel, of his crooked expediency, world-serving counsels.\*

I have, in the foregoing, it may be *rather unceremoniously*—but then I am a plain man—stated how your Grace hath fallen from your original and early state of greatness. I will now adduce how you may recover your lost influence in the hearts of the people. *Strive heart and hand* (it is never too late to mend!), as it becomes a Christian hero, to erase from the columns of the statute-book the execrable, exterminating New Poor-Law Amendment-Act. Do so; and you will be *once more* hailed as the saviour of your country; and your name will go down yet, unblemished, to our children's children! On the other hand, continue in your unrighteous league with the pauper-slaughtering faction, and who dare answer for the consequence—who but can foretell the results! Universal anarchy—confusion—desperation—and all the horrors that wait, like slaves, on civil war! For the oppressed are *many*—but their oppressors are *few*!

Ah! as if a prophet inspired to foresay coming events, methinks I see the terrible catastrophe, scarlet with the gore of tyrants, which will certainly follow the turning of the worm; and, if the present system of pauper woes, outraging the laws of God and man, be persisted in, that *dread turning* is not far distant! When it does take place, awful will the retribution be! Burning cities and towns; and villages depopulated and wasted, will be as common as starving wretches *are now*—and “To the death!” with the murderers of our fathers, children, and wives, will be the onset cry—the not *unprovoked* onset cry—of those who have borne so much and *can bear no longer*!

When that terrible rendering of account comes, between the oppressed and oppressor—as come it will, unless the poor are righted—'tis not, then, the consciousness of being a duke or an earl, a bishop or a dean, or the descendant of a hundred belted sires, or the performance of past acts of heroism in the tented field, or of eloquence in the listening senate, which will turn aside popular wrath, or be sufficient to save, in the people's day of anger! The question then will be: “wer't thou for, or *against* us? Didst thou help to free, or to *enslave* us?—to starve, or to feed us?—Dids't thou allow our wives and daughters to be debauched and abused, and afterwards to be left to die of ignominy and hunger in the public streets, or the *contrary*?—Didst thou ‘*Marcuslike*,’ attempt to destroy our pretty ones, by ‘painless extinction,’ or to tear those, whom God had joined together, asunder?”—Wo to him and his, hereafter, who cannot answer these questions innocently; and who cannot look back, and virtuously exclaim, “I, too, was an anti-poor-law agitator!”

It will be then, I say, the avowal of having been with Oastler, Stanhope, Stephens, O'Connor, Bull, Walter, Fielden, Baxter, and the rest, the “*dozen poor-law agitators*,” that will carry more power with it, to protect, than the boast of being the lineal descendant of one of the Norman bastard's bravoes.

\* “Sir Robert Peel is doubtless a great man, a strong man armed with greater political talents than any of his contemporaries; but he wrests them to his own shame, and God is greater than he: God, by the weak things of this world, has invariably confounded the strong. By things that are not, God is bringing to nought things that are. Gallio may go on caring for none of these things.” So says the Rev. Edward Duncombe, of Tadcaster, in his excellent pamphlet against Centralization.—Peel is only seeking the first *decent opportunity* to go over to the Whig camp. He has been crying “mum” to Lord John Russell's “budget” for some time past.

'Tis then, the owners and lords of forests, chases, parks, warrens, and such other lands, tenements, and hereditaments—of palaces, castles, mansions—high and mighty as they bear them now, will quake beneath the fierce eyes of the avengers, demanding retribution for a *massacred father*—a *famished mother*—a *debauched sister*—a *wife*—a *brother*—a *child that died in bastille agony*! And when that period of awe arrives, they, the lords of much land, and gold, and silver, will be ready to give worlds, were it not *too late, not to have assisted* in the work of exterminating God's poor—his old—his helpless!

In vain, then, will the noblest—even *you*, my Lord Duke, assert your high name, and, in imitation of the dying Grotius, exclaim, "Sum Wellingtonius!" (I am Wellington!) to excite pity and respect; but no voice will reply—"Tu Magnus ille Wellingtonius?" (are you the great Duke of Wellington?) except you can declare, that you had *no hand* in the bloody work of the Somerset-house villains. Beware! therefore, my Lord Duke, and let your order also beware!—and let you and them do so, in time, and cease from being active in establishing a reign of terror in your and their native England. Turn from the blood-thirsty wretches who would do so—and oh, *turn soon*!

Think not, your Grace, that in writing the foregoing admonitory sentences, I am excited by seditious feelings—or actuated only by vanity; and, like a schoolboy on the 5th of November, have been letting off "half-a-dozen dangerous words," merely for the gratification of hearing them *reported*: far from it. Neither has it been my desire to create false alarms—In surety thereof go, your Grace, to the manufacturing towns—to great cities—anywhere, in fact, where poor men do congregate, and in every street and lane, you will behold

"——— a grisly band—  
I see them stalk—they linger yet,  
Avengers!"

and are only waiting for their leader's signal—and that signal, if the obnoxious New Poor-Law be not repealed, will not *much longer*—*cannot much longer*, with humanity—be withheld!\*

My Lord Duke, the knowledge that such at present *is the state of affairs* in

\* Since the first publication of this letter, the *New Poor-Law* riots at Newport, Sheffield, Birmingham, Newcastle, &c., attended by serious loss of life, and destruction of several hundred thousand pounds' worth of property, not to mention the public money squandered to fee soldiers, police, and spies, to put them down, have occurred. There is a *bit* of a calm now; and some people fondly suppose, because a few men have been imprisoned for rising, that it will last—in short, that "rebellion's dead," and all noble-manly, gentlemanly, and tradesbody, and banker England, like Thomas Thumb, may "go to breakfast." But how sadly are they deceived! As long as the New Poor-Law desecrates the statute-book, so long will rebellion lie smouldering—now flickering up in flame, and now burning with quiet and sly, but fatal fire—in the bowels of the land. The people are still armed; they have still, the greatest number of them, though perhaps not as some months ago, overtly displayed on their chimney-pieces, and in their fists, to use *Stephens's* tongue, "a club, or a bludgeon, or a pike, or a dagger, or a sword, or a spear, or a pistol, or a carbine, or a musket, or a little bit of a pop-gun of a larger bore." They still have these *armorial bearings*, I say; the only difference is they do not expose them as they erst did; viz., two guns, the one loaded and the other not, over the chimney-piece, with a written intimation "telling anybody that chose to take the one, that he should have the other given to him." No; the greater portion of the people's armoury is *now* under ground: the pikes do not flash in the pale moonlight as they did, or the reports of their fire-arms arouse and startle the midnight air: apparently all are clerks of the peace. But what then? Are not the reptiles, without rattles, the most deadly? Oh! ye improvident citizens! repeal the accursed New Poor-Law—or, mark it well—the consequences will be what I foresee and shudder at, but *dare not tell*! Perhaps you will say it will only, at the worst, be a little bit of a skirmish between the police and the people. Do you think so? When news of the sacking and destruction of the Bastille was brought to Lewis XVI. he exclaimed, "It is a revolt!" "No, Sire," replied a courtier, "It is a revolution!" Listen those, who have ears to ear: THE NEW POOR-LAW MUST BE REPEALED, OR THERE WILL BE A REVOLUTION! AY, AND A RETRIBUTION TOO! For be well assured that the people, yet,

For child and for wife,  
Will war to the knife.



this country, is awful to consider to every one—the more so to you who, by your *chronicled approval* of the horrid “boon,” have *considerably* caused all this. Something ought to be done, and it must be done, in order not to drive further the working classes to desperation, which the administration of the present infamous system of pauper-jurisprudence is *daily—hourly doing!* And in the work of a people’s, a country’s salvation, no one (*save Oastler*, perhaps) could effect more than your Grace. As a plain man, therefore, and echoing the voice of thousands, I say do it; and don’t be deterred from the performance by the erroneous idea that the people, in their present discontents, as in the times of the reform mania, are only actuated with the desire of mere *change*.

Nor above all, your Grace, despise their organs—the people’s organs of public sentiment. Believe me, and ’tis no exaggeration, the leaders who head them now, are not like the hot-skulled ruffians of the reform days, who ordered the burning of Bristol and of Nottingham Castle. You may think that they are mere spouters and scribblers—but don’t deceive yourself. There is not a hand, nor a tongue among them, which has been used to scribble to some paper or “eightpenny matter” of a periodical—or address a torchlight meeting—the owner of which, if need be, but dare, by the same mouth that harangued an anti-poor-law demonstration, to order an army—with the same hand that handled a pen, to clutch, should the people demand it, a *dagger too!*

I am, my Lord Duke, *one* who would hail with delight your appearance in the ranks of *humanity* and *justice*; and, in hopes that I may *yet* have the gratification, I beg to subscribe myself, your Grace’s most obedient and devoted servant,

Hereford, August, 1839.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

### THE TOO-LONG-NEGLECTED OASTLER NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL FUND.\*

A SORT OF PARABLE, TOGETHER WITH A FEW PLAIN SENTENCES OF INQUIRY AND REPROOF, ADDRESSED BY THE AUTHOR OF “HUMOUR AND PATHOS,” “DON JUAN, JUNIOR,” “POOR-LAW PAPERS,” &c., &c., TO THE SECRETARY, TREASURER, AND OTHERS, HAVING THE CONDUCT OF THE “OASTLER NATIONAL TESTIMONIAL FUND,” ON THEIR APATHY AND NEGLECT, AS OFFICIAL MANAGERS OF THE SAME: WITH AN EXHORTATION EMPHATICALLY—MOST EMPHATICALLY CALLING UPON THEM AS MEN—MEN OF HONOUR, OF HUMANITY, OF FEELING—MEN OF THEIR WORD—TO SHAKE OFF THEIR TOO-LONG-PROTRACTED INERTNESS; AND, IN THEIR INDIVIDUAL CAPACITIES, TO BE UP AND BE DOING FOR THE NOBLEST BEING THAT EVER WAS PRAISED BY PEN, OR FOUGHT FOR WITH SWORD—RICHARD OASTLER;—WHO HAS GIVEN UP £700 A-YEAR—A CHERISHED HOME—PEACE—PLEASURE, AND DOMESTIC SOLACE, FOR THE SAKE OF HIS POORER BRETHREN—FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY, CHRISTIANITY, AND JUSTICE—FOR THE SAKE OF HIS COUNTRY AND HIS GOD.

“He spake by a parable.”—JOHN viii. 4.

“Nay, *fed as they were* (and this makes it a dark case),  
With sops every day from the Lion’s own pan.”

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

T. MOORE.

“Have you no friends? I *had*, but by God’s blessing,  
I’ve not been troubled with them *lately*.”—DON JUAN, SENIOR.

GENTLEMEN,—Once on a time, and legends may tell it, and it may still be

\* This appeared in several papers during 1838-9, and in the *Sheffield Iris*, March 10, 1840.

extant, "written in very choice Italian," for what I know,—there was an old benevolent gentleman (God bless him!) who, in his charitable attentions—out early and late—to the poor of his vicinity, contracted—and more's the pity!—a most "whoreson cold." At first, he paid (for he was not of the complaining sort) very little regard to it, conceiving, as many have done before him, that, by abstaining from all manner of animal food, brandy-wine, and thorough draughts, and dieting on mutton-broth, barley-water, gruel, white-wine whey, treacle-posset, &c., &c., he should (D.V.) recover his wonted health. But, *malgré* his housekeeper's most assiduous address in concocting, to a nicety, the aforesaid liquid emollients, and his (her master's) most assiduous address in propelling them down his throat, he every day grew worse and worse—waxed hoarser and hoarser—till, at last, his bodily salvation was in such a precarious state, that *Molly*, his housekeeper, opined that, in addition to broths, wheys, and possets, he ought to take advice; and accordingly, (for he himself would never have done so) despatched her daughter's eldest son to the neighbouring town, to press into the assistance of her aforesaid tried potations, a Physician and an Apothecary. These twin hereditary descendants of Æsculapius soon arrived; for they were more burdened—at least, so said some *wicked wits*—with *patience*, than with *patients*—and immediately had an audience of the benevolent old gentleman—felt his pulse—inspected his tongue—put several significant questions concerning the state of his bowels—how he felt, slept, ate, drank, &c., &c.; to which queries their patient, as well as he was able, returned responses, which showed that his case was anything but an enviable one. On hearing this, the M.D. and his subordinate bade him be of good cheer;—"not to alarm himself; people didn't *always* die of a putrid sore throat; his cold was certainly *rather* a serious one—there was no denying that; but he must have patience;—Rome was not built in a day;—wait a little, and they'd soon put him right; a few days, or may they never prescribe or spread a plaster again! and he should be as whole as if nothing had happened!" And then they told him what *sovereign* remedies they would send him: such a *nice* warm draught!" "pills as palatable as sugar-plums," and "a blister so mild—so *leetle* irritating—causing more a pleasing itch than anything else—a lady might wear it and go the next day to a queen's wedding!"

The old gentleman cocked up his ears at the pleasing intelligence; and then, with a smile on his lip, which said as plainly as smile could, "do they mean it?" if so, I shall soon be convalescent, and enabled again to visit the poor cottages:—"do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame!"

The medical "staff," after the usual time and talk, shook hands with their patient—good God! how polite and friendly they were on the occasion! Heavens! how profuse they were in tenders of respect for what they called—and they would not flatter for the world, or the *wardrobe* (?) of a Coburg Prince—"his really humane and philanthropic character"—how frequent in their assurances of his speedy and almost instantaneous recovery: "he should (they protested) be himself again," before he could articulate "Jack Robinson!"

They having thus paid him every courtesy, mounted their steeds and rode off; all the way, however, dilating mutually what an immensity of good they would do for their patient in *no time*: not only remove entirely his present indisposition, but make him quite a different man for the future. "Dear old gentleman!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Such a *WORTHY* character!" answered the Apothecary. "And so good to the poor," again repeated the Doctor. "He is *that*," responded the Apothecary. "Ah," said the superior practitioner; "well, we'll soon get him about again; that pill, I mean to prescribe to be taken at bed-time, well worked off by the *nice* warm draught in the morning, will do his business, you may depend upon it."

And so they went on chattering, 'till, peradventure, they arrived at an inn by the way-side. "Dry?" inquired the Diplomatist of Aberdeen to his compa-



nion. "Rayther so;" replied the Licentiate of Apothecaries' Hall, accompanying his response with an illustrative scraping of the throat, as if in corroboration of the arid state of its internal jurisprudence. "What say to a glass of fresh ale? they say there is a pretty goodish tap kept here." "I don't care if I do." "Very well, and I'll stand the shot." "Here!" to a younker, "hold these horses, will you, my lad?" And they dismounted and entered the bar of the — Arms: issued their orders—duly discussed the same—and then, the ale was so refreshing, such a generous taste of the barley, so rigid an economy of water—the bitter of the hop so delicately insinuated—that they must have another *pint a-piece*. . . . And, then, in due season, another—and then—it was superstitious to be sure—but three was such an unlucky number to give over with! And what were two quarts to men who had had a sharp trot? Nothing; simply nothing; and accordingly the fourth modicum was introduced on the mahogany—and, then, a fifth—a sixth—a seventh—an eighth—a ninth—a tenth: and the next morning, the worthy couple, "Jolly companions every one!" were still sojourning in the tap-room of the — Arms; but not exactly, it must be confessed, in the same state, in which they had entered its precincts the evening before: insomuch as the Diplomatist of Aberdeen might be discovered sleeping most calmly and comfortably, with his head under the fire-grate—*à la* the example of George the Fourth, of pious and immortal memory, the first night of his nuptials (vide Lady Shameful Bury's *nice* compilation for the precedent): while his subaltern, who answered in "*Pigot's Directory*" to the designation of Chemist and Druggist, &c., was in an equal state of pleasing oblivion, at the foot of a "clock in case," which appeared (*fugit tempus*) to tick and watch over him with the most affectionate solicitude.

Now, I am no enemy to any gentleman or gentlemen *innocently* enjoying himself or themselves in this manner, always supposing it does not interfere with the transaction of love or friendship's duties; which, in the present instance, as has been related, it certainly somewhat did. As for want of the "*nice* warm draught," the pills, &c., which they had promised to send, and which, howbeit, they did *not* send,—the poor old benevolent gentleman died, as nearly as possible, about the same time as they, the medical practitioners, were cracking the last "*pot a-piece*," which had substantiated them in the honourable situations I have previously described.

Gentlemen, you will wonder, I dare say, what all this has to do with you and the "Oastler National Testimonial Fund"—I will enlighten you. Oastler's is a parallel case to the old benevolent gentleman's, with the shocking bad cold, of the text; seeing he, like his prototype of the said cold, has, through his charitable endeavours in behalf of the poor, involved himself in a similar dangerous predicament, with regard to his fortune, as the other did with regard to his health: and you, gentlemen, synonymous to the gallant M.D. and the Apothecary, in your "*great cry and little wool*," have uttered "brave words" of condolence—of permanent, speedy, and munificent assistance in his ears: he should have, you told him, in private and public, *rivâ voce* and in print, "*a better house soon*;" he should be bought a "freehold estate, annuity, or such other investment, as a committee, appointed by, and from, the subscribers, should deem most advisable, to enable him (Mr. Oastler) to devote himself entirely to public life, as the equal friend of the rich and poor, on the principles of Christianity, humanity, and justice,"\* &c., &c., &c.; and &c., &c., &c. Now, I don't wish to say that you, gentlemen, instead of fulfilling your promissory protestations, have taken to immoderate potations of Sir John Barleycorn, like the twain worshipful disciples of the healing art in the parable; but I do assert

\* Part of the heading of the Prospectus of the "Oastler National Testimonial Fund," issued in the summer of 1838, the day of Mr. Oastler's departure from Fixby-hall, for *conscience's* sake, and because he had and would tune, for the poor and helpless, the

"Still, sad music of humanity!"

that you have most assuredly, by some unaccountable act of forgetfulness, neglected to *prove your words* in his behalf;\* and, in fact, I suppose, and how can I account for it in *any other manner*, have for these fifteen months thought no more of the matter, or the man!† *Out of sight, out of mind—no more treat dinners at Fixby now, &c., &c.: isn't it?*

Gentlemen, I do not desire to reflect on you unheard—far from it—but, as you volunteered to undertake, some months ago, the sole superintendence and management of collecting the subscriptions and promoting the pecuniary welfare of the “National Testimonial Fund,” as you designated it, for my friend Oastler—I, as that noble individual's friend, (England, indeed! hath *no worthier* son than he!) think I have a right, at least I shall assume it, to ask you a question or two, (for the future provision of such a man—such a *fine fellow*, as “Good King Richard,” is not a thing to be trifled with any longer, as it has been under your Ministry—nor shall it be either, if I can prevent it). Under these circumstances, I recapitulate, I beg thus publicly, to put the inquiry to you, and that seriously, viz.:—*the reason of the apathy and total inattention which you now exhibit, and, for several months past, have exhibited in the affair—officially exhibited as Treasurer, Secretary, &c., &c., of the Fund in question?*

Good God! after all your *promissory notes*, you don't intend in this sneaking fashion, to desert Oastler, do you? If you do, the very stones, hard as Poor-Law Commissioners' hearts, will rise up against you all in shame! Or, is it, you are and have been *afraid*, to show yourselves men of truth in the matter of the “Testimonial,” for grievous bodily fear of the blood-stained Ministry—the Whigs—the recreant Yorkshire “*Shallow, Esq.*” (Thornhill)—the Poor-Law Commissioners, and the Devil? 'Sdeath! by your culpable inactivity in the affair, you lay and have laid yourselves open to all these imputations and worse. What mean your present and past torpidness and silence concerning it? And why arn't you enthusiastic in your vocation? Methinks, if I were in your places, the very name of Oastler—the *king of the poor Factory child!* would make me *irresistible* and *super-zealous* in my endeavours—would make me—but, there, why, at least, let me ask—why have you given up advertising in the public prints, the origin, progression, and state of the “Fund;” and the detailed list of those, who, like the Hon. William Duncombe, Messrs. Fielden, Brothers, &c.,‡ and other well-disposed persons, have already subscribed to it? Why don't you officially invite others to follow their meritorious example? Why haven't you done this? Why don't you? As you haven't and don't, do not deplore the paucity of subscribers: for how can people subscribe, when, owing to your mysterious and inexplicable manner of concealing the fact, by not having afforded it a proper publicity in the papers—they are mostly ignorant that such a subscription is still in being; and certainly must be *gloriously uninformed*, by whom subscriptions are “thankfully received.” But this state of things must not continue. Awake, then, and arise—shake off your apathy and indolence, Messrs., the Treasurer and Secretary, &c.; and let the existence of a “Fund” (it does still exist, I hope,

\* When Mr. Oastler, on leaving Fixby, was put down at his brother-in-law's house at Huddersfield, the universal cries were—“Never mind; we'll get you a better soon!” It is, needless to say, these cuckoo notes have, to this calendar moment, *never been verified*; on the contrary, have turned out “as false as dicers' oaths!” Alas! the ingratitude of man often makes one mourn!

† Mr. Oastler left Fixby-hall the 25th of August, 1838, when the placards printed on the occasion proclaimed: “The People claim him as their own.—Oastler is henceforth the Man of the People.” Shameful, bitter mockery! The “Man of the People” indeed! when they have since deserted him, and, if he had been a more needy man, he might have starved for all they cared! After the “cursed Testimonial” put your trust in the People, and be deceived as Oastler has been! Alas! alas!

‡ The Hon. William Duncombe subscribed £50, and Messrs. Fielden, Brothers, Todmorden, £200 towards the “Oastler Testimonial.” It will be told as a memorial of them hereafter!



dosen't it?) to reward the exalted patriotism and fine humanity of Richard Oastler, be generally authenticated and known through the width and breadth of the land, and I'll be bondsman, and bet Prince Albert's former *one* "filthy dowlas" to his present *Field Marshal's uniform*, that there will not be wanting, in any part or portion of the kingdom, those who will not only be willing, but *enjoyed*, to contribute to the support of England's greatest patriot and her *best*!

Gentlemen, I am no courtier—no lord of the bedchamber; I have always spoken out, as *vide* my many letters antagonistic to the New Poor-Law\*—and I always shall: particularly, when a friend is in the question—and such a friend as Richard Oastler—*Richard, mon Roi!* Therefore, I must confess, and it is with sorrow more than with anger—sorrow for men's breach of faith! that I do so—that, as matters appear to me, you have been for some time past most palpably *indifferent*, if not altogether neglectful of the interests of the benevolent individual entrusted to your care on his departure from *Fixby-Hall*. At the first, on assuming the discretionary powers of directors and managers of the "Testimonial," I am well aware, by the demonstrations in the Yorkshire papers, at the time, you, each in his appointed function, exhibited some symptoms of apparent ardour and assiduity. Why, then, subsequently, have those symptoms of ardour and assiduity in behalf of your friend (you all call him such, don't you?) the patriot Oastler, waxed cold? Is not Oastler as deserving as ever of your exertions and support? Has he done aught to forfeit your esteem, or incur good men's displeasure? Has he recently been the receiver, like *one-shirt Coburg*, of £37,000 per annum of the tax-payers' money,† and now no longer requires it, (the "Testimonial Fund?") or, what does it mean? Surely, by the powers of perfidy! you don't join neck and crop in the despicable onslaught-cry of the base Whig press and their as base (with certain laudable exceptions) accomplices of the Conservative ditto,—with the coward Baronet Grey‡ so summarily put down, the other night, by the Hon. W. Duncombe, in the Commons' House (since the Reform and Emancipation Bills, the house of *pscha, pscha,*) and with that *pig-faced* old lady, Radnor,§ and the yellow-faced cannibal, Brougham, in the Lords' House (since the Whig pitch-fork system, the house of *pooh, pooh,*) and believe him, the good Oastler, to be an incendiary and a madman?

If *these* be not your grounds for inattention to Oastler's interests—once more, let me ask, for you must have *some reasons* for showing the *cold shoulder*, of what high crimes and misdemeanours do you accuse him? Not of the continuancy of the infernal, pauper-slaughter decree as the law (?) of these realms, I hope? For 'tis not *his* fault that such a *hellish, rebellion-creating* enactment is yet existent; or, that those partisans of the "Devil and all his works," the cannibal commission-ocracy, and their subaltern savages, the guardians, union clerks, union surgeons, union chaplains, union keepers, union schoolmasters, union body-snatchers, overseers, and relieving officers, still exercise their abominable functions, and drive (God! where are thy thunderbolts?) a lucrative "cash trade" from the slaughtered remains, broken hearts, and pinched bodies of heaven's poor in England and Wales. 'Tis not *his* fault (he has given up cheerfully £700 per annum—his home—his *dear home*—his health—his peace—all! that it should

\* *Vide the Metropolitan Conservative Journal for 1837-38.*

† The Duke of Saxe (!), including his colonelcy and Field-Marshal's wages, pockets certainly that delicatsum total, per annum, if not more, of John Bull's twenty shilling pieces.

‡ At the commencement of the Parliamentary session of 1840, this worthy in his place (or rather out) deemed it becoming to scandalize Mr. Oastler *behind his back*, but was incontinently sent howling to the kennel side of the House by the Hon. W. Duncombe's well-applied lash.—*Vide Parliamentary Debates for February, 1840.*

§ Alluding to this noble Lord's having, in the autumn of 1839, turned a poor widow, who was gleaning, out of one of his cornfields, and immediately afterwards turned in a "herd of swine." *Excellent Lord Radnor! and excellent times!* when

"Pigs' rush in where angels dare not tread."

*not be so*) that our canals and rivers—our ponds and ditches, are still (as *vide* the newspapers) choked up with the remains of seduced females—once so bright-eyed, so joyous, so innocent, so beautiful!—and the murdered bodies of the offspring of their shame and sorrow. 'Tis not, in continuation, *his* fault, (has he not been persecuted and maligned by Press and Peer—by Minister and murderer—for striving to prevent it?) that *skillies*, *poisoned broths*, and other “noxious things,” are still administered; and still, with brutal violence, trundled down the loathing and shrieking throats of the unfortunate paupers in the Bastile dungeons of dread and despair!—Again, 'tis not his fault—(turn to his burning, indignant harangues against their erection)—that those union-houses of bondage—“England's lasting shame!” now with—

“Many a foul and midnight murder fed!”

are still permitted to rear their pestiferous fronts o'er all the pleasant lands! Again and again, I reiterate, it is not *his* fault, that the infernal system, of which the foregoing, together with continual robberies, rebellions, and incendiarisms, are the products, is still allowed to be. He has suffered more than *any other man*—more than any other man *could*—and more than any other man *dared*, to expel, with groans and execrations, from the statute-book, such a disgraceful reproach to a civilized country, as the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act. *He*, I say, of all men, be they lords or loons, has *nobly* played *his* part—*enthusiastically* done his duty!

It is true, and “pity 'tis 'tis true,” and a shame too! others, the “Lords and Gentlemen,” the *well-paid* Bishops and Clergy—those boasted members of the “Poor Man's Church,”\*—the opulent merchants,—the rich tradesmen,—they *were called upon* to co-operate with him in his Godlike endeavours;—but they *responded not* to the call. He did, and essayed everything to incite them, by appealing to their humanity, their Christianity, their love of justice,—nay, to their *personal fears*, to enlist and fight the *good fight* with him—but in vain. He, therefore, cannot be blamed—cannot help it, after *all* that has been *said*—*all* that has been *done*—all the evils—the *frequent highway robberies*, *rebellions*, and *massacres*—the *Birmingham*, *Canterbury*, and *Newport horrors*, which the “Act” *has produced*—all the evils which it threatens, and *certainly will produce*, if *not incontinently repealed*—that the higher and middle classes, with some *meritorious exceptions*, have been, and still remain, deaf to the agonies and shrieks of their poorer brethren, and their own and their country's danger;—and still persist, come what has come, and come what may, from those *offsprings* of the Bastile system, Chartism and Socialism, to stand unconcerned, “like crocodiles,” as the John Russell of his day, little carotid-artery-cutting Castlereagh once said, “with their hands in their breeches' pockets!”—Oastler can't help this, much less can he be made *responsible*, because the Duke of Wellington (*it won't do to tell* on his gravestone, in “Westminster's Old Abbey!”) has, and is determined, from his “lungs military,” to advocate the “Act,” and join unnatural issue with the tyrants and oppressors in “*gibes* and *blouting*” at the miseries of the poor and helpless.—Nor, above all, is Oastler to be deserted by those “his *former bounty fed*,” because such traitors, as

\* The following are, and have been, bright and blessed exceptions; and, in their constant and determined opposition to the New Poor-Law, have shown themselves *practical working* ministers of the Poor Man's Church, viz., The Bishop of Exeter; the Hon. and Rev. Godolphin Osborne, of Eton; Rev. G. S. Bull, of Birmingham; Rev. W. G. Cookeley, of Eton; Rev. Edward Duncombe, of Newton Kyme, Tadcaster; Rev. C. Fowell Watts, of Bath; Rev. F. H. Maberley, of Bourne, Cambridgeshire; Rev. Stephen Butler, of Soberton, Hants; Rev. F. L. Clay, Chawleigh, Devon; Rev. John James, of Neath, Glamorganshire; Rev. Edmund Dewdney, of Portsea; Rev. Thomas Curtis, of Sevenoaks, Kent; Rev. A. S. Atchison, of Teigh, Stamford, Lincolnshire; Rev. Richard Cruttwell, of Spexhall, Suffolk; Rev. W. M. Smith Mariott, of Horsmonden, near Tunbridge, Kent; Rev. W. Brock, Rectory, Bishop's Waltham, Hants; Rev. H. Luxmoore, Barnstaple, Devon; Rev. Thomas Sockett, of Petworth.



Brougham, Melbourne, Radnor, Fitzwilliam, Stradbroke, Chadwick, John Russell,\* and the demon Commissioners, are not impeached and led, as they *richly merit*, to that gaunt, high tree, from which the "traitor's leap" cures all ambition, and destroys the capability of perpetrating more atrocities!

Gentlemen, in the foregoing portion of my letter, I have deprecated your long and injurious disregard of your duties, as managers of the "*Testimonial Fund*," it may be, perhaps, *too severely*—if so, it was my *friendship*—my *love* for Richard Oastler, that prompted me to it.—I have, also, attempted, as *often* I have before, in my political writings—(though, heaven knows! it would require a more eloquent pen than mine, to award him half the laudation he deserves) to do Richard Oastler and his good deeds—and they are *many*—justice. I now, before I lay down my pen, will address two or three "*more last words*" to you—and they are, to most solemnly exhort you, as you love principle—as you adore benevolence—as you revere religion—as you esteem humanity and worship your God—be up and be doing, and that enthusiastically and strenuously for one, to whom all these—principle—benevolence—religion—humanity—and God are so closely allied—and do not, as I have said on a former occasion, and your exertions, believe me, may do *much* for him—do not, as ye are men, suffer this *fine fellow, Richard Oastler, to fall an easy prey to want, and his "base, brutal, and bloody" enemies.*†

Hoping, Gentlemen, my poor words will have the salutary effects I propose, viz,—the instantaneous arousing of your spirited exertions in realizing "*a Testimonial*" worthy of a "*King*"—a *King of Hearts*,

I am,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

Monkton, near Pembroke, March 1, 1840.

## THE MONKEY AND THE PAUPERS.

### A TRUE ANECDOTE.

A gentleman, a surgeon in P———, had, some time ago, a monkey given him. This ape happened to be a very vicious one; and, moreover, possessed an ugly knack of biting any one who was so injudicious as to approach too near his "situate." The gentleman finding from experience that he was too dangerous an inmate to associate with his family, by virtue of prerogative as chief magistrate (he being mayor), sent it to board and lodge with the aged and young paupers! *humanely* supposing, that the monkey, who was too vitiated to dwell with his family, would be an *agreeable companion*, inclusive of its habit of snapping, for the poor, helpless, and aged.

The poor of P———, at the time of this occurrence, and during the completion of the Bastile in that neighbourhood, were imprisoned‡ (*under*

\* Each and all of these worthies are most determined Bastile and Bastardy men; and are well-authenticated, individually, as "coarser-food" Brougham, "Raise-the-moral-character-of-the-labourer" Melbourne (that to be sure it has done with a vengeance!), pigs-versus-widow Radnor, "it's-good-enough-for-the-idle-rascals" Fitzwilliam, "weigh-them-after-meals" Stradbroke, "I-sign-the-order-for-their-execution" Chadwick, "it-works-well" Russell, &c.

† When Mr. Oastler left Fixby in August, 1838, and, in the language of one of the placards issued on the occasion, "delivered himself from the hands of 'Squire Thornhill into the hands of the people," he little thought, I dare say, that those people would afterwards reproduce the ingratitude of the 'Squire aforesaid, so shamefully.

‡ The New Poor-Law system of never suffering the wretched inmates of the Union dungeons to egress from their horrid confinement, is not only cruel, but unnecessarily so, as Mr. Poor-Law Commissioner Henderson, in the First Report of the Poor-Law Commissioners, published 1833, speaking of the paupers in the workhouse at Oldham, says, "They

*Somerset-house regulations*) in a narrow passage of about two yards wide, and fifty long, with cells built up on each side. This abode of wretchedness was commonly called the "Long Entry," and opened with a door, thickly studded with iron nails, into the main street—the door in question being always closed. There, the monkey, the hero of my talk, was made, though, I believe, much against his will, to take up his residence; and was treated in every respect, like his fellow-captives, the poor paupers; receiving the same rations of coarse bread (only *rather more*) and "skilly" broth; slept in a similar cell, &c., &c. He had only one advantage over his fellow-prisoners, *i.e.*, being visited by his friends—an advantage which was not allowed to the paupers. But, notwithstanding this advantage in his favour, Jackanapes did not relish his confinement; on the contrary, he grew very morose under it; and his daily and nightly squealings and chatterings told—as plainly as squealings and chatterings could—that, though such treatment might be very well for aged paupers, who had seen better days, it was not at all such as ought to be awarded to a *gentleman's monkey*!

But justice, for once, even in a workhouse, had its way; and the parties, who had previously closed their ears against the moans of the pauper, now equally closed them against the squeals of the monkey. The poor, by long endurance, were compelled to submit to their cheerless lot; but the monkey was of a different temperament; and to show his determination not to be buried alive, one day, in his "angry mood," bit two of his companions in misfortune (two pauper children), who had approached too near with an intention to console him in his confinement. One of these children remained for a long time dangerously ill from his unfriendly attack; *the other died of the bite!*—(Contributed, through Mr. Oastler, by the author of this work, to the *Manchester and Salford Advertiser*, Jan. 5, 1839.)

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### MR. RICHARD OASTLER, THE PEOPLE'S PATRIOT!

AN INVOCATION ADDRESSED BY THE AUTHOR OF "HUMOUR AND PATHOS," "POOR-LAW PAPERS," "DON JUAN, JUNIOR," &c., &c., TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND OF ALL CLASSES AND PARTIES—MORE ESPECIALLY TO THE FINE-HEARTED MEN OF YORKSHIRE—EMPHATICALLY BESEECHING THEM TO COME FORWARD, AND PROTECT, BY SUBSCRIPTIONS, THE PATRIOT OASTLER, AND TO FULFIL THEIR PROMISES MADE AT HUDDERSFIELD, WHEN THEIR "OLD TORY KING" WAS DRIVEN FROM FIXBY-HALL, TO HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW'S HOUSE, "TO FIND HIM A BETTER ONE SOON."

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—————"He must not sink,  
The good, the brave—he must not  
Shall not sink."—KIRKE WHITE.

"Let the people do their duty, as Mr. Oastler has done his, and he becomes at once, as their friend and defender, ten thousandfold mightier, than either his friends could have hoped, or his foes could have feared."—PROSPECTUS OF THE "OASTLER TESTIMONIAL."

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FRIENDS AND FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,—You cannot be ignorant that there is at present a "base, brutal, and bloody" conspiracy hatching by the powers of hell, to insiduously cut off, one by one, all those who have proved themselves your benefactors. The means by which your enemies hope to achieve such a desirable consummation to themselves—desirable, inasmuch as its realization would keep them undisturbed in office, and deliver you, bound hand and foot,

are allowed to go out when their work is done, on asking leave, and the Governor said that *bad consequences seldom followed the indulgence.*"



by rural police and gagging acts, to their mercy—are as unprincipled as they are manifold,—and decidedly opposed to the dictates of Magna Charta, and the liberties of the subject. Thus, to accomplish their purposes, and secretly undermine\* and destroy men, whom, for fear of your popular retribution hooting them from place to place, they dare not (*there's no coward like your Whig*) openly attack, the atrocious espionage system of *Oliver and Castles* has been, with double ignominy, revived; false witnesses, ready-to-attest anything swearers, the filthiest scum of Government reporters and Government police have been, at large salaries, engaged; and “green bags,” overflowing, like a *naked Coburg's purse*, when it has been filled by the fool John Bull, with the most abominable “*non mi ricordo*” matter, have been reproduced. While, in addition to these veritable *Sidmouth* auxiliaries, *weak Yorkshire “Shallow” Squires*, doubtless under promise of pitchfork peerages and Brummagem baronetages, have been suborned to say they “are wronged,” and institute vexatious civil actions. Bribes, too, from the treasury purse (*i. e. your pockets*), have been plenteously distributed, and applied to the itchy palms of the presiding ninnyhammers of the Whig press, to conceive and propagate cases of madness, incendiarism, and treason† against your dearest and your best! Not to mention, that seditious harangues have been *duly authenticated*, which were never uttered by the persons impeached, for the purpose of affording a colour and pretext to the mendaciloquent accusations, which they have dared, in the face of the honest indignation of all upright men, to charge your noblest counsellors, protectors, and friends.

Among those who stand in that meritorious relation towards you, whom they have succeeded but too well in entangling in the snares of their treachery, (for what could an honest and honourable man do against a powerful and unprincipled conspiracy, determined to effect his ruin!) is—let no sound come between your ears and silence, while I whisper a name—a dear and enthusiastic name, never heard by you, but with the loudest booms of admiration and applause—the man of your choice—of your confidence—“your King”—“*Richard Oastler!*” Yes, *Richard Oastler*, because he dared be honest—dared be honourable—dared be humane—dared be religious—dared shield you and yours from the “painless extinction” of “*Marcus*,” starvation, poisoned skillies, “coarser food,” dungeons, sabre-cuts, and ball-cartridges; because he dared, when all hands were against you and all hearts,—step nobly forward, and with the eloquence of a god,—an eloquence intense and powerful in the cause of heaven's poor, but terror-striking to the man-slayers and woman-quellers of the Bastiles—declare that you should not, being *guiltless of crime*, be dragged to rot and fester in the unwholesome cells of the union-houses of bondage, because you chanced to

\* To show the paltry spite which abounds in the Whig “powers that be” against the opponents of the accursed, incendiary, and revolutionary New Poor-Law, for months, my newspapers (as *vide* the *Sheffield Iris* of the 24th of March, and April 24, *Sheffield Patriot* of April 14, *Champion* of April 22, *Cheltenham Free Press* of March 21, *Carmarthen Journal* of the 14th and 27th of March, 1840), have been purposely missent, and frequently lost, passing through the post; and last year (1839), on the publication of my “*Don Juan, Junior*,” I have it from *secret yet sure* authority, that communications, written by Downing-street and Somerset-house *fists*, were directed to such town and country booksellers as they dared take the liberty with, (of course, containing a *con-sid-er-a-tion*) directing them *not to order or expose the work for sale!!* Not to mention, that in several *abusing and Billingsgate reviews* of the same, in certain *nameless* pests of the press, the *executioner* hands of a member of the Poor-Law Commissionocracy, and of that “little fiend that scoffs incessantly,” Lord John Russell, were *extremely conspicuous*.

† Oastler, that *nobleman* by nature, the enthusiastic, the good, the great, the generous, was, not long ago, called by the *scunks* of the Whig press, a traitor, an incendiary, and a madman!!! Believe, posterity!!!! Among the many of the *paid* Downing-street and Somerset-house *reptilia*, who thus stigmatized the *finest fellow* in the world, Baines, (*subaudi M.P.*) in the *Leeds Mercury*, was, as might have been expected, as busy as his paternal ancestor generally is accredited to be, in a *gale of wind*. But their “curses are like chickens, they always come home to roost;” so Baines look out for your brood.

be poor;—that your wives, sisters, and daughters—as virtuous as they!—yea, more so than many of the satin-clad and diamond-gemmed wives, sisters, and daughters (*vide the crim. con. trials*) of “my Lords and Gentlemen”—should not be handed over an authorized prey to lust and brutality; that your children—your “*pretty ones*”—should not be torn from your bosoms; and, by “Societies” miscalled “Friendly,”\* transported thousands of miles across the deep waters to distant colonies; that your limbs should not be tied up and manacled, if at any time, in the Bastile prisons, you happened to converse with your wretched relatives and friends;† that the bodies of your murdered dead should not, without the decent ceremonial of book, bell, and pall, be trundled into an unconsecrated hole, like deceased dogs, cats, rats, and stots.

For the declaring this in your behalf, and, moreover, asserting that you were worthy of your hire, and had a vested right in the soil, your interceder and advocate has, (God! that might should overcome right—vice, virtue, cruelty, humanity!) been pounced upon as a victim by your destroyers; and if filthy lucre, perjuries, falsehoods, and the grossest perversion of justice can do it, they are determined to effect his ruin! For, not contented with having, by the most *ungenerous* means, deprived him of his livelihood and “sweet home,” they have, as you are well aware, by the infamous assistance of a dull and silly aristocrat, or, as Shakespere would appropriately designate the chap, “a very shallow monster”—“a very weak monster”—“a most poor *credulous* monster”—“a most *perfidious* and puppy-headed monster”—one that gloats and fattens upon your sinews! saddled him with an infamous lawsuit. By such unworthy co-operation, I say, your ENEMIES, the Whigs, have succeeded in getting up a Government prosecution (for Thornhill, *Esquire*, his action is only really such in *disguise*) against “good King Richard;” and they, the miscreants, have boasted, through the mouthpiece of their *tool* (for the outlay will be theirs, not the *tool’s*) that they will spend a *hundred thousand pounds sooner than they will not put up Oastler’s tombstone!!!* ‡

Men of England!—her brave peasantry and noble artisans! will you suffer this to be?—allow this tyranny—permit this wrong?—I hear you, in response, rend the sky and clouds with a unanimous and glorious “No!”—with deafening cheers for your “good old Tory King,” and dreadful groans for his enemies. My friends, I dearly love to hear you thus give vent to your feelings—to do so is the immemorial right of Englishmen; and I hope that period will never arrive when such a right shall be discouraged and discontinued. But remember, groans, however deep, will not scare away the oppressors from their ungodly purposes, or cheers, however loud, enable the oppressed to defend himself against the oppressors’ tyranny. It is true, cheers, like the strains of martial music, will encourage and invigorate Oastler as he fights his battles—which, in truth, are yours also—but the sinews of war, which will empower him to consummate his victory, or cover his retreat (if worsted), are wanting.

Already (and cordially do I bless you for it) have you honoured Oastler,

\* The atrocious instance (among many), of a child’s being torn from its mother, and sent to the Cape of Good Hope (?) by an infamous and almost *Marcus* association, designated, hypocritically, “The Children’s Friend Society,” about a year ago (the beginning of 1839), must be in the recollection of all readers of newspapers.

† Amongst the cruelties exercised on the inmates of the Wisney Union, is the *silent system*. It appears that husband, wife, and children, are separated, and never see each other, except at meals; and then they are not allowed to speak to each other, *on pain of being tied up*; viz., by *having one leg tied up, and being obliged to rest on the other for half-an-hour!!!!* —*Oxford Chronicle* of the 1st of Jan., 1839.

‡ Fact. Thornhill has often been heard to splutter the *charitable* exclamation of the text. After this, well may the Scriptures pronounce it to be “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.” Envy not the rich, therefore, ye hungry poor, but look at the condition of this Yorkshire ‘squire’s heart, its “hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness” against his “just steward,” and bless God that ye are, *yourselves*.



as never public man was honoured before—his political progress by you has been made one triumphal march of enthusiasm! You have everywhere met him with silken banners, joyous music, loud huzzas, and all the “pride, pomp, and circumstance” of the most exalted popularity; and when he has spoken—he of the burning tongue—you have forgotten your misery, and hung on his accents with delight, as if they were the soft breathings of your first loves, and shook the wide land with your exclams when they were finished. You have forwarded him, from all parts of this queendom, addresses of confidence, of love, of gratitude, of approval! You have had medals struck of him; and that his dear, benevolent countenance should be ever before your eyes, you have transferred his likeness to your drinking mugs, teacups, and dinner-platters.\* Not a paper issues from the press but what is filled with his renown—a Christian’s renown—and whose columns are not fame-scented with reports of his eloquence, his patriotism, and fine humanity. His life and the chronicles of his good deeds are in the hands of all—from the coronetted noble to the nobler peasant—from the mitred bishop to the hooded deacon; and directly a periodical is known to contain a portrait, life, speech, letter, or anecdote of the “King,” a double circulation is the result.† Dinners, meetings, and commemorations of all sorts—in the open air and under cover—by torch-light and otherwise, you have invited him to. Pieces of plate, too, you have presented to him—yea, a thing, perhaps, never heard of before—even the tenants of his greatest enemy, *Thornhill*, have (so universally is he esteemed) presented him with one!‡ While, to sum up all, and give the finishing stroke to his glory, the very soldiers that were some time ago sent to take him dead or alive, if need should be, have been discovered on their knees, praying for him in their guard-rooms; and likenesses of him have been found attached and concealed in the pummels of their saddles! ||

\* Dinner and tea-services of ware and china, with portraits of Oastler, and views of Fixby-hall, were advertised for sale in the papers, *vide the Northern Star* of 1838, and other Yorkshire and Lancashire journals. The following is an advertisement which appeared in the *Northern Star* of Dec. 1, 1838.

“EARTHENWARE.—James Greaves begs most respectfully to inform the public of Huddersfield and Dewsbury, and their respective neighbourhoods, that he intends to offer to their notice, a quantity of Earthenware, with splendid portraits of J. R. Stephens, and Richard Oastler, engraved on the ware.—Mr. G. will be in Huddersfield in the course of a few days.”

† The immense circulation of the *Northern Star* was originally much owing to the letters and portraits and speeches of Mr. Oastler, which appeared in that periodical during the first twelve months of its publication.

‡ A fact. In Dec., 1838, Thornhill’s tenants unanimously voted Mr. Oastler a splendid piece of plate . . . “We have been favoured with the sight of a most elegant silver salver, which has been this week forwarded to Mr. Oastler by the tenants of one part of the Yorkshire estates of Mr. Thornhill. The pattern round the salver is beautifully executed in frosted silver, and the centre occupied by the following inscription: ‘*This piece of plate is presented by the tenants of Thomas Thornhill, Esq., who are resident in the township of Fixby, to Richard Oastler, and is intended as a feeble expression of their sincere respect, and heartfelt affection, both towards himself and his late revered father, who, together, have for thirty-eight years discharged, with unblemished integrity, genuine kindness, and unsuspected disinterestedness, the office of Stewards upon Mr. Thornhill’s Yorkshire estates, and who will both live, at whatever distance of time, in the best feelings of their hearts. Fixby, August 25th, 1838.*’ We cannot but sympathize in the honest feelings of gratification which Mr. Oastler must have in this testimony to his worth by those amongst whom he has lived for years.”—*Manchester Advertiser*, Dec. 15, 1838.

|| Also facts. The soldiers are, as a body, *particularly attached to the “Old Tory King.”* “A friend of mine, a Methodist, went into their barracks, I won’t say at Manchester, though it was not one hundred miles off. On entering their rooms, he began to talk serious things. He was informed that they had a prayer-meeting, and was invited to go to it. He went, and several soldiers prayed. My friend asked them what they prayed for? One of the soldiers answered, they prayed that God Almighty might bless the widows, the fatherless, and the oppressed; that he would strengthen the hands of those persons who were endeavouring to prevent them being crushed; and they prayed especially for Stephens and Oastler. One old stager, a Waterloo soldier, observed my friend, said he had never seen Stephens or Oastler, but he should know them if he were to see them. “How so?” asked my friend, and he was taken to the stable for an answer. There the old soldier took up part of the

So has Richard Oastler been honoured! Such marks of distinction and esteem has he received at your hands! But, my friends and fellow-countrymen, these demonstrations, let me again recapitulate, however well-intentioned on your parts, are most impotent to save. Honours, be they ever so signal, let me inculcate on your hearts, will not pay the expenses of a protracted lawsuit, or support a dearly beloved wife; neither will they feed or clothe, or liquidate the heavy and too frequent calls of the Queen's or *Coburg's* taxes. To satisfy such demands, Oastler must have gold and silver! and from whom ought he to receive it but from you, whose acknowledged champion he is; and for whose sakes he has been persecuted—is suffering—is impoverished. The smallest donation, even the smallest coin, unanimously from each of you, would establish him above his difficulties—enable him to defy the machinations of his enemies—and empower him to contend for your rights and liberties with greater ardour and chance of success. Your “King” requires, in his old age, such assistance from you, and your “King’s” friend, G. R. Wythen Baxter, now asks it of you, and will you refuse his request?

Remember, on that memorable occasion, when, by thousands and tens of thousands, you led him in triumph (oh! how I blessed you at the time!) from Fixby-hall, to his brother-in-law’s house, at Huddersfield—that day, by token, he gave up *£700 per annum and a cherished home for your sakes*—one and all, enthusiastically exclaimed, as he told you that (his brother-in-law’s house) would be his abode for a short time—“*Never mind; we’ll get you a better one soon!!*” That promise is yet unfulfilled! and Oastler, he who so doted upon a home, is, to this moment, a *Houseless Wanderer!* I know Oastler is too proud—too independent—too disinterested a man, ever to put you in mind of that promise; but I, as his friend, have no such scruples—and here, *emphatically call upon you to fulfil it.*

Listen to me, my friends; I am no orator as Oastler is, but a plain and homely man, who hates oppression as the devil, and loves his friend. Now Oastler is my friend—a most valued and esteemed friend; but what is he not—has he not been to you? *Your saviour—your benefactor—your protector—your patriot—your father—your king!* For you he has, without a murmur, risked his life, his liberty; and lost all—his fortune, home, domestic peace—all in your behalf. Obloquy and insult, in lavish abundance, have, by the organs of all parties, to their shame, been heaped upon his noble and honourable head, because of his endeavours in your service; and his ruthless foes, for the same cause, not satisfied, as the most malicious might have been, after hunting him

“ — by foul lies from his heart’s home,  
An early chosen—late lamented—home,”

are now rancorously seeking, through their minion Thornhill—that hoary picture of ingratitude!—to deprive him of liberty—his life if they can—to harass and drive him to despair by vexatious law (?) proceedings\*, and force him in

equipage, I don’t know the name of it, and there was a portrait of Stephens and another of Oastler. “I keep them there,” said the Waterloo man, “in order that I may know them.”—*Mr. Oastler’s Farewell Speech at Huddersfield, reported in the “Halifax Guardian,”* January 26, 1839.

\* Since this was written Mr. Oastler’s action has been tried. The cause was heard on the 10th of July, 1840, and terminated “entirely,” to use Mr. Oastler’s words in a letter to the author of this work, “to his satisfaction.” The only ground of Mr. Oastler’s resistance was Thornhill’s charge of fraud, and that being distinctly, and by universal acclamation, proclaimed an unfounded charge of the ‘Squire’s by the Judge, and even by the counsel for the plaintiff in the court, Mr. Oastler wanted no more. The following is an extract from the trial:—

“MR. OASTLER said he had merely resisted the action because he understood that it had been imputed to him that he had fraudulently detained the money, whereas it now appeared to be acknowledged that it was a simple matter of debt.

“THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE observed, that there was no imputation whatever upon Mr. Oastler’s character here.



his old age, when infirmities, griefs, and sickness are gathered like spies around him, to pine and drag out the last of his days in indigence and misery.

As such barbarous and diabolical attempts against the life, liberty, and peace of your Benefactor, are meditated, now then, is your time to come forward, and you *are bound to do so*, to succour and assist him, who has ever been so ready to succour and assist all of you. Think of what he has done for your sakes, and show your gratitude. Had it not been for him and his timely interference—his glorious, enthusiastic exertions—“*Marcus*” massacres, broken-hearted massacres, *skilly* massacres, famine massacres, and sword and bayonet massacres, would have left very few of you to this time, to bless his Godlike endeavours and detest his fiendlike opponents. Think of all this, I reiterate; and, oh! let not this benevolent being—the only one ever so renowned for defending you *gratuitously*—whose heart would have bled its best blood to right you—let not him have to exclaim—“*I dearly loved them, those artisans and peasantry—I gave up cheerfully, all for them—my home, my liberty, my life, were theirs—but how they have repaid me—let my old age of destitution show!!*” \*

Men of England! Men of England! if ye possess one particle of his beautiful enthusiasm—one particle of his generous feelings—one particle of gratitude—ye will not give him, Richard Oastler, cause to say this—ye will not suffer this fine fellow to sink, without exhibiting some hearty and strenuous manifestations in his favour. Believe me, Oastler's well-being is your safety—his freedom from the gyves of circumstances, your protection—from the worse shackles of universal slavery and universal extermination!

One word more to you and I have done—and that is most seriously and energetically to invoke you, one and all, to do your duty—your *grateful duty* to Richard Oastler. By, then, the “big ha' Bible,” which he has taught you to revere—by the iron chains of bondage which he has torn from your limbs—by the many sacrifices he has made for your welfare—by the bitter sufferings he, and his dear wife, and adopted daughter, have endured in your cause—by his powerful and electrifying eloquence never heard too oft, and which has soothed you and yours in your misery and despair—do not, as ye are men—as ye have hearts—let this noble—this enthusiastic—this generous Englishman fall an easy prey to his “base, brutal, and bloody” enemies! If ye do—by the indignant scorn that burns upon my brow at the bare thought of such ingratitude—I,—and you know I have done you *some service*—cast you off for ever!—and trust your other known and tried friends will follow my example . . . But you will not—I know you will not prove such ingrates—I know—for you are *Englishmen*—you will not desert your “old Tory King”—your own—*own* Oastler!

I am, Friends and Fellow-countrymen,

Your sincere well-wisher,

Monkton, near Pembroke,  
April 4th, 1840.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

“MR. OASTLER said that was all he had ever wished to be settled.

“Here a conference took place between the learned counsel and the defendant, which resulted in an arrangement to the effect that a verdict was taken for the plaintiff for £2,600, without prejudice to a claim of the defendant against the plaintiff for £500; the defendant to deliver up the books to the plaintiff, on receiving a release from him of all claims and demands whatsoever, except as to the amount of the verdict.

“MR. KELLY, after stating to the learned Judge the terms of the arrangement, said he felt great pleasure at this unpleasant affair being thus satisfactorily settled.

“LORD CHIEF JUSTICE TINDAL.—I am very glad, Mr. Oastler, that this action is brought to such a satisfactory settlement.

“MR. OASTLER bowed to his Lordship.

“A verdict was then entered for the above sum, and the Court rose.

“MR. KELLY applied to the Lord Chief Justice to certify for a special jury.

“THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE refused to comply.”

\* Since this was written, Mr. Oastler, as will be seen by the following articles in this work, has been shut up by Mr. Thornhill (to please the Whigs) in the Fleet prison. Alas!

P.S.—I beg of the *Times*, *Standard*, *Champion*, *Dispatch*, *Conservative Journal*, the *Leeds Intelligencer*, *Northern Star*, *Halifax Guardian*, *Manchester Advertiser*, *Liverpool Mail*, &c., &c., and all papers which adore patriotism and hate the infernal New Poor-Law—who love Oastler and despise his paltry oppressors—I beg of them all—without regard to party—collectively and individually, to copy this Invocation into their respective columns—to give it *every publicity*—and to call the attention of their numerous readers to the matter contained in the same. I, also, take the opportunity, at the same time, of most respectfully requesting Earl Stanhope, Mr. John Fielden, M.P., the Hon. W. Duncombe, M.P., Mr. Walter, (*who ought to have been M.P. for Southwark*), the Rev. Mr. Bull, Mr. Day, of Southwark, Mr. Roberts, of Sheffield, Dr. Fletcher, of Bury, Mr. Bowen, of Bridgewater, Mr. Roworth, of Nottingham, Mr. R. J. Richardson, of Salford, &c., and other *influential opponents of the Bastile system of horrors*, will purchase copies of the newspapers publishing this Invocation, and afford it all possible circulation, by distribution of them among their friends, tenants, servants, and retainers,—and by such an act of *sympathy* for Mr. Oastler, they will gain the good wishes of hundreds of thousands of the working classes.

Let them do so ; and let them aid G. R. Wythen Baxter, in his humble but hearty endeavours to organize, in *reality*, a “Testimonial” *worthy* to present to and reward the exalted, genuine patriotism of—Good King Richard. Let them, I say, show *every respect* to Richard Oastler in these *troubulous days*, so trying to men’s souls ; for, to use the words of the Prospectus to the “Oastler Testimonial”—“Our Constitution has no abler champion—our National Christianity has no firmer defender. The People have neither Representative nor Leader like Oastler—at once competent to the mighty task, and equal to the emergency of the times.”

G. R. W. B.

### MR. OASTLER IN THE FLEET PRISON.\*

NOBLEMEN, GENTLEMEN, TRADESMEN, and WORKING-MEN OF ENGLAND AND WALES,—I have learnt, with much indignation and poignant regret, that Richard Oastler has, by the renewal of proceedings of Mr. Thomas Thornhill, been dragged from his family to the Fleet Prison.

I am too much excited by the suddenness and sadness of the intelligence, and by that indignation which, as one of his most attached friends, I cannot help but feel,—to address you at length on the occasion ; but I ask you, will you suffer this wrong to be ? Will you permit the “King of the Poor Factory Child” to rot in a common prison-house ?

Will you suffer this fine fellow—this man so noble by nature—so pre-eminently humane, so friendly, so generous, so enthusiastic, and so good, to fall an easy prey to his unscrupulous Whig enemies, whose silly dupe Thornhill must be ? Will you suffer the friend of the late lamented Michael Thomas Sadler to be thus revengefully incarcerated and “mewed up” without making some lively demonstration in his favour ?

I hope and trust you will not ; and I now propose for your adoption, that immediately a public subscription be set on foot all over England and Wales, to rescue the noble Oastler from the fangs of his merciless creditor.

In making this appeal to your sympathies, I desire to enlist, without reference to party, or the furtherance of party purpose, the *good* and *well-intentioned* of every political denomination, and of every rank in life, to co-operate, heart

to use the memorable words spoken of the gallant Raleigh, that “such a fine bird should be kept to sing in a cage !”

\* Mr. Oastler entered the Fleet Dec. 9, 1840. The above address appeared in the *Leeds Intelligencer* of Dec. 26, in the *Northern Star* of ditto, the *London Times* of Jan. 7, 1841, &c., &c.



and hand, to release Mr. Oastler from his unjust and injurious confinement. Yes ; I call on all those, be they peers or people, gentlemen or tradesmen, who worship the God Oastler worships—who love their country as Oastler has loved it—who care for the poor as Oastler has cared for them—who revere the fine, generous feelings, and firm, undeviating principle, which Oastler has ever exhibited the possession of—to *now* come forward, and, by their unanimous subscriptions, chronicle their hatred of oppression, their respect for England's noblest heart now sorely tried, and their sympathetic consideration for a just and upright man struggling with, but not subdued by, the ruthless onslaught of an unworthy foe, and an adverse fate.

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“ He must not sink—  
The good, the brave—he must not,  
Shall not sink !”

I have the honour to be,  
Noblemen, Gentlemen, Tradesmen, and Working-Men of England  
and Wales,  
Your most obedient servant,  
G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

P. S.—Until such time as Committees can be organized to carry the plan of a general subscription for Mr. Oastler into execution, I shall be happy to receive Subscribers' Names.

\*\*\* I have just learnt that my friend Oastler intends, on the 2d of January next, to bring out a series of papers weekly, to be called “The Fleet Papers,” whose object will be the constitutional upholding of the rights of “The Altar, the Throne, and the Cottage,” and I trust that all who are well-wishers of that trio will take in the work—it will be but twopence a-week !—G. R. W. B.

Hereford, Easton-place, Dec. 20, 1840.

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### MR. OASTLER'S “FLEET PAPERS.”

A FEW WORDS, ADDRESSED BY THE AUTHOR OF “HUMOUR AND PATHOS,”  
“POOR-LAW PAPERS,” “DON JUAN, JUNIOR,” &c., TO THE PEOPLE OF YORK-  
SHIRE AND LANCASHIRE, EXHORTING THEM TO BUY THEIR “OLD KING'S”  
BOOK.

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“Flowers are lovely ; love is flowerlike ;  
*Friendship is a sheltering tree :*  
O ! the joys that come down showerlike  
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty !”—COLERIDGE.

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MEN OF YORKSHIRE AND LANCASHIRE,—This Saturday,\* your captive “King,” from the gloom of his prison-house, sends forth upon the waters of public favour his little literary venture, freighted with a fresh and precious cargo of his benevolent ideas, and

“Goodliest plans of happiness on earth,  
And peace and liberty !”

Yes ; this day the first number of your *own* Oastler's “Fleet Papers” has made its appearance, and you, I trust, my friends, will vindicate yourselves from the opprobrium of being thought one great plurality of worldliness and ingrati-

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\* The first number of the “*Fleet Papers*” appeared on Jan. 2, 1841, and this little friendly herald was inserted in the *Halifax Guardian*, *Northern Star*, Leeds, &c., &c., of the same day. It has, subsequently, been published in the *Sheffield Iris* of Jan. 5, and several other Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Welsh papers. It was, also, plentifully distributed in handbills, on the occasion, all over England and Wales.

tude, by going in hundreds, and in thousands, and in tens of thousands, to the booksellers' shops in your respective neighbourhoods, and there possessing yourselves of the treasure of your "Old King's" printed patriotism and soul-animating thoughts—a treasure which you could keep in remembrance of him—a treasure which it would become you to bequeath to your children—a treasure which he now places within the reach of all of you, at so cheap a rate as *twopence*.

Men of Yorkshire and Lancashire, you must do this little service for your "King"—the King of your ill-used factory children—and the bosom friend of the late lamented Michael Thomas Sadler—and you must do it, not individually but collectively,—not in one city, town, or village only, but in every city, town, and village, throughout the length and breadth of Yorkshire and Lancashire. You must do so: and, with your wives and daughters (for their glorious bright eyes must light you up with enthusiasm!) present yourselves in troops—*troops of Oastler's friends*—yes, in regular standing armies of bookbuyers, you must besiege the bibliopolists' stalls, and, each arming himself and herself with the mental weapons of Oastler's warrior scriptures for the right and against the wrong, exhibit the grand moral spectacle of a general and generous people, honouring and succouring, by their encouragement, a just and upright man, who stands in native dignity of worth, keeping his adverse foes and fate at bay—unsubdued, though deprived of liberty and in ruin!

You must do this: and, as you and your wives and daughters return homewards, in glory and in *gratitude*, with each a purchased copy of the "*Fleet Papers*" in hand, it will be a fine sight—and a long-remembered, instructive lesson to those who hereafter may feel disposed to play private or public tyrants. Your wives and daughters, believe me, in thus exhibiting their sympathy and attachment for their imprisoned benefactor, and each with *his book* in her hand, will look infinitely more noble than the present Queen of the Esquimaux did, when in her nuptial robes, flashing with jewelled splendour, like

"The moonbeams when they fall  
Through some cathedral window,"

she gave that "pretty, foolish thing," her royal person, and £37,000 a-year of the starving people's tallow, to a gilt-gingerbread or German stranger! While you, my bold Fustain Jackets, as you hold in your blistered palms Oastler's "bit o' writin'," will stand confessed (for what is more honourable than *gratitude*?) much more deserving and worthy objects than a Prince Halbert, a Count Sword, a Don Dagger, or a Baron Belt, equipped in all the fashionable millinery of a Field-Marshal's harness, even though each should have a grey parrot, *which recently cost fifty pounds of the public fat*, perched on his fist!\*

\* "A beautiful grey parrot arrived at the Castle this afternoon, which has been purchased by Prince Albert for fifty guineas, of Mr. Shepherd of the City-road. The Prince saw it at Buckingham-Palace, where it was taken by command of his Royal Highness by Mr. Shepherd," &c.—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Dec. 26, 1840. The same paper of Jan. 16, 1841, has the additional interesting *morceau* concerning his Royal Highness—"Prince Albert took a fancy to the fifty-guinea horse of a gentleman in Hyde Park, and ultimately purchased it for a thousand guineas." Again, the *Dispatch* of Jan. 10, 1841, intimates that "It is said that Prince Albert's kennels are to be lined with India rubber to prevent the dogs from taking cold." Well, these are princely traits to be sure, and, with his Royal Highness's adroitness in pushing her Majesty's sledge on the ice, and his songs and rondos down the throats of the musical public—together with the notoriety of his walking-stick, his Hussars, his pension, and the tulip called after him in the *Florist Magazine*, &c., and other similar *Souvenirs d'Allemagne*, must be *highly gratifying* to the pauper inmates of that Union Workhouse (the Windsor) whose lot he publicly sometime back announced in the newspapers was so *blest and beautiful exceedingly*. The following reminiscences must, likewise, be very *consoling* to the said Unionists: viz., that his Royal Highness has fitted up an apartment in Buckingham Palace as a painter's studio, with palette, drawing-paper, and box of paints, complete;—that his Royal Highness is about to study the laws of England



Then, what a severe blow and signal discouragement will be your enthusiastic support of Oastler's periodical, to the "dirty, damned rogues" (as Ben Jonson would have called them,) of Somerset-house, who, ever since his incarceration, have been fattening themselves with a paltry and pitiful joyfulness at his undoing! The very mere turning over by you of the leaves of Oastler's book, will dash all the coarse sweets of their contentment with bitterness, and cause each commissioned slaughterer, from Edwin Chadwick downwards, to wax as

"Mad as the priestess of the Delphic god!"

The local debility of Downing-street, too, will incontinently become weaker and more miserable at the knowledge of your enthusiasm; and, hereafter, persecution would lose its sting, and persecutors their victory!

Besides, now that every department of the business of blarney and *quack-quack*, is so prosperous and flourishing in this monarchy, and the upper classes are continually, with exceeding ill-judgment, *placing* and *pensioning* and *praising* and *petting* the wretched, wilful charlatans who lucubrate, for prompt payment, in three volumes, their vain and vicious adventures and vagabondage—and the sickly sorrows and sickening sentimentalities of scribbler lords and ladies run, like dish-water, through countless editions:—now such things are, I say, it would be well on your parts to show that you, as a body, can discriminate and appreciate better—that you, too, have the *power*, to patronize, and the *will* to bestow that patronage, when injured merit, patriotic worth, persecuted benevolence, and natural nobility, are the candidates for your support and approval.

Twaddle is not always a book-seller; and, in the present instance, by prolonging my gossiping, I may, perchance, mar the welfare of the work, the success of which I *so* desire to promote. Therefore, I will now conclude,—but, before I do so, I must give you one cheer more—and that is—*Buy the Great and Good Man's Book!*

I am, Men of Yorkshire and Lancashire,

Your sincere well-wisher,

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER

P.S.—Although the above is addressed especially to the Men of Yorkshire and Lancashire, who know Oastler best, and must love him most; yet, the inhabitants of all England, I trust, will obey my exhortation and—*Buy the Great and Good Man's Book!* The sons and daughters of "Bonnie Scotland," too, I hope will do so; and green Erin's people will also. Nor will, I hope, my own native *Cymru*—both the Waleses, North and South, be backward, but, from Plinlimmon's top to the Vale of Neath, echo back enthusiastically—"We will *Buy the Great and Good Man's Book!*"—G. R. W. B.

Hereford, Jan. 2, 1841.

## COPY OF A PETITION.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom in Parliament assembled.

under the able superintendence of a barrister learned therein;—that his Royal Highness, upon all occasions, in all meetings, except when otherwise provided by Act of Parliament, shall have, hold, and enjoy, place, pre-eminence, and precedence, next to her Majesty (*Gazette*, Feb. 1840); that his Royal Highness "accompanied by Viscount Melbourne, &c., left the Castle for—preserves, where the party were engaged a short time in shooting, and returned about two o'clock;" that "it is said to be the intention of his Royal Highness, who possesses several exceedingly valuable brood mares, to devote some portion of his leisure time to the breeding of horses (*Conservative*, Feb. 6, 1841);—that his Royal Highness has erected a bar to practise horse-leaping with, to enable him to obtain the requisite proficiency to hunt with the royal hounds, &c., &c. *Mein Gott! das Vaterland ist der Himmel!*

The Humble Petition\* of G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER, and the undersigned Inhabitants of the City of Hereford,

Showeth,—That your petitioners are greatly alarmed at the knowledge that a bill is at present before your Honourable House to continue the powers of the Poor-Law Commissioners for ten years.

That your petitioners consider such power as possessed by the Commissioners to be in principle most unconstitutional—in practice most dangerous—and that they (the Commissioners) have uniformly exercised the same in an extremely arbitrary, cruel, expensive, and vexatious manner.

That your petitioners, therefore, pray that the office of Commissioner—whether Central or Assistant—be abolished, and that the management of the rate-payers' money, in every parish, be restored to its former and rightful administrators; viz., those who pay the rates, and who must know *better* how to expend the same than a board of three perfect strangers residing in London.

That your petitioners have now had some years' experience of the New Poor-Law in their city and neighbourhood, and have found its operation to have been very baneful both to the rate-payers and the poor—and that it has considerably increased the rates, and likewise crime—particularly infanticides and sheep-stealing; that the number of instances of bastardy has also been greatly augmented, and that beggars and other distressed objects are every day becoming more numerous and more wretched in appearance.

That, finally, your petitioners implore that your Honourable House will, for the sake of humanity, and for the peace of the country at large, not permit the bill for the Ten Years' Continuance of the Commissioners to pass into law.

And your petitioners will ever pray, &c.

## THE WORKING OF THE NEW POOR-LAW IN THE AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS!!!

TO THE EDITORS OF THE "SHEFFIELD IRIS."†

GENTLEMEN,—I beg to inclose you, for insertion in your columns of the *Iris*, a copy of a petition presented to the House of Commons, on Monday, the 1st inst., by my esteemed and honourable friend, T. S. Duncombe, Esq., M.P. for Finsbury,‡ and hope the same will be interesting to your numerous

\* This petition was circulated for signatures by the author in the city of Hereford, March, 1841.

† This appeared in the *Sheffield Iris* of March 9, 1841, and subsequently in several other papers.

‡ "HOUSE OF COMMONS, Monday, March 1, 1841.—Mr. T. Duncombe presented a petition against the bill from Mr. G. R. W. Baxter, of Hereford. The petitioner stated, that he had watched the operation of the bill with great care, and that he had seen it cruel and oppressive to the poor almost beyond human endurance; that it had raised the poor-rates from 4s. to 9s. 7½d. in Hereford; that it had incited to child-murder, and that incendiarism had commenced; that it had greatly increased the number of criminals for trial at the Hereford Assizes and Quarter-Sessions, and that such was the hatred of the Union workhouse, that some women who had been in one of them with their bastard children, declared that they would rather perish in a ditch by the road-side than again go into them."—*Times*, March 2, 1841. On the reception in Hereford of the news of the presentation of the above memorial, great and grievous was the alarm among the Somerset-houseites—especially among the long-necked poultry of the Board of Guardians. The Chairman cried out "rape!" and the Chaplain, "fire!" The Collector trembled double, himself and shadow (*i. e.* his son) and the Relieving Officer, like many poor wretched paupers whom he had daily driven away empty, could find *no relief* from his extreme fright, for his teeth they would "chatter, chatter, chatter, chatter still!" What was to be done? A meeting of the Guardians was called forthwith to deliberate. Captain Funk took the chair, and Messrs. Fear, Trembling, Terror, and many others, attended. The assassination of the petitioner, as recommended by their Somerset-house correspondent, was proposed, and would have been carried *nem. con.*,



readers, and, also, to those romantic personages, Messrs. Robert Peel, Gally Knight, Grantley Berkeley, Joseph Hume, &c., &c., who proclaim, in soft charitable voices, the "Act" works *so well*, especially in the *Agricultural Districts*.

I am, yours, very truly,  
G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom in Parliament assembled.

The petition of GEORGE ROBERT WYTHEN BAXTER, author of "Poor-Law Papers," &c., an inhabitant of the City of Hereford,

Showeth,—That your petitioner regards, with exceeding alarm and regret, not unmingled with feelings of *indignation* and *astonishment*, that, after the enormous official and establishment expenses,—the many horrors,—paupers' deaths,—and public discontent and revolutionary insubordination, which the New Poor-Law has entailed, and *is entailing*, upon the country—a bill should have been proposed to continue for ten years, and to *considerably increase* the already too arbitrary and dangerous powers of its numerous Commissioners.

That your petitioner has always esteemed the original New Poor-Law Amendment-Act, enacted in 1834, to have been nothing less than the *revolutionary passing* of the capital punishment of death upon the British Constitution; and he considers that if the present "Commissioners' Continuance Ten Years' Bill" be made law, it will speedily put that *sentence into execution*.

That your petitioner *prophetically* warns your Honourable House, that this libticide bill, if passed, and subsequently administered by the Commissioners, with their known disregard of all human sympathies, and natural affections—with their accustomed contempt of every local privilege and old-established usage,—will at last weary out the patience and forbearance even of a people so proverbial for their longsuffering and slowness to anger as the British nation, and that a disastrous and terrible revolution will be the result—the *not unnatural result* thereof.

That your petitioner should have thought, after the previous administration of the Poor-Law Commissioners—which, in spite of *interested party* statements

only a difficulty was started that it would be a hazardous matter to get behind him (the petitioner), as he generally had *all his buttons about him*—and two or more could play at *sharps* or *pops*. "Well," was the unanimous hiccough, "if we cannot cut his throat, we can cut up his testimony; we'll send up a counter-petition to the House, denouncing, officially, that all that he has chronicled is fudge, and that the law works as nicely as a *Factory child*." Agreed, responded omnes, and we'll get the *Hereford Journal* to notify our dreadful, desperate determination. On the following Wednesday, the Commissioners' print, trembling like an aspen leaf, did (the penny being pouched) enunciate a short, dull, dismal howl for its *skilley* patrons. The howl in question was immediately answered so:—

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'HEREFORD JOURNAL,'"

"SIR,—The following *morceau* appeared in your paper of last Wednesday (March 10)—"In consequence of some unfounded assertions in regard to the operation of the Poor-Law in this city, the Board of Guardians of the Hereford Union have agreed to a petition to the House of Commons, pointing out that the assertions that 'infanticide and incendiarism have increased, and that unmarried mothers of children have declared that they would rather die in a ditch than go into the workhouse,' have no foundation in fact."

"Now, as this paragraph evidently alludes to a petition of mine presented to the Commons on Monday, the 1st inst., by my honourable friend, Mr. T. S. Duncombe—in answer, I beg to say, that I have no will or time to be drawn into a discussion; but that I am prepared to prove, before any proper tribunal, that infanticide and incendiarism have increased since the introduction of the New Poor-Law in Herefordshire," and that "unmarried mothers of children have declared, that they would rather die in a ditch than go into the workhouse."

"The paragraph in question, moreover, declares, 'that the Guardians have agreed to a petition to the House of Commons, pointing out, that the statements contained in my memorial have no foundation in fact.' " I have only to hope they will do so, as in that case I shall also send up a further corroborative continuation of my former petition, and the result, peradventure, will be, that a proper investigation of the working of the New Poor-Law in Herefordshire will take place—a result which not only I, but my fellow-associates in the good cause, will very much rejoice at.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient, humble servant,  
G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER."

"Hereford, Easton-place,  
"March 10, 1841."

to the contrary, has everywhere been so signally unsuccessful in beneficial consequences, and so savage in the perpetration of cruelty,—so decidedly failing in the practical realization of their own published and promissory theories,—but, at the same time, so notorious for the exercise of unnecessary coercion and harshness, and for the unlimited and licentious expenditure of the rate-payers' money:—Your petitioner should have thought, he repeats, that no *Christian*, or *civilized*, or *politic* government would have the conscience, the temerity, the hard-heartedness to propose the adoption of a bill, having for its distinguished features the bestowal of additional powers on, and the almost perpetual continuance of, so utterly an unconstitutional, unscrupulous, and irresponsible authority as the Poor-Law Commission.

That your petitioner has narrowly watched the working of the New Poor-Law system in his own county, *Herefordshire*, and has found the same to be cruel, and expensive *almost beyond endurance*, both to the poor and the rate-payers. To give some examples:—In the *City of Hereford*, the householders, who formerly, under the old system, were rated at 4s. per rate, *are now paying* 9s. 7½d.; and many farmers in the county have publicly declared their inability to keep on their farms and pay such exorbitant poor-rates! But, notwithstanding this increase of parochial taxation, the general consequences of the operation of the New Poor-Law in *Herefordshire*, have been most demoralizing and destructive. As in corroboration: Instances of bastardy now happen to an extent *unprecedented under the Old Law*; sheep-stealing is greatly on the *increase* (*vide* the local papers); and incendiarism, formerly almost unknown in this county, is at present of *frequent occurrence*. Not further back than the night of Saturday, the 31st of January last, a respectable farmer, of the name of Stephens, living at *Hundertton*, within a mile of the *City of Hereford*, had his barns and out-buildings destroyed by fire to the amount of between £300 and £400, which work of destruction is supposed to have been the act of an incendiary. Again, the serious and unnatural offence of child murder is *constantly being committed* in this county; for scarcely has an assize been held since the introduction of the New Poor-Law, but what there have been trials for infanticide; and at this very time there are two unfortunate females to be tried for that heinous offence.

But, besides these cases of crime and costliness, illustrative of the evil and expensive operation of the New Poor-Law, just related by your petitioner, many instances of extreme harshness and hardship have occurred in this vicinity, owing to the strict adherence to the rules and regulations as promulgated by the Commissioners. Last year two or more reports appeared in the *Hereford Newspapers*, detailing that the bodies of pauper children deceased had *remained for weeks unburied*, in consequence of the inability of the parents on the one hand, and the refusal and *non-legal* liability of the parochial authorities on the other, to defray the expense of the last right of sepulture. Several authenticated sad catastrophes of deaths from want and destitution have likewise occurred. Among other instances, it was currently reported last summer that a man of the name of *Knell*, who had not previously tasted food for two days, having been given some victuals by a compassionate publican, devoured the same so voraciously that he shortly afterwards died on the hay-stack of a farmer, residing within a short distance of the *City of Hereford*.

The *dread*, too, of the destitute poor to enter the *Hereford Union Work-house* has produced, and is producing, the perpetration (*for they will not starve!*) of sheep,\* corn, potato, turnip, and poultry stealing,† and other smaller depredations on agricultural produce, to an alarming and ruinous ex-

\* “SHEEP STEALING.—This species of crime seems to be on the *increase* in this neighbourhood.”—*Hereford Times*, Jan. 16, 1841.

† “POULTRY STEALING.—This offence still continues very common in the neighbourhood of Ledbury.”—*Hereford Times*, March 6, 1841.



tent in this neighbourhood: and in corroboration that this abhorrence of the Union Workhouse has been instrumental in increasing crime, is the following extract from the *Hereford Journal*, of Dec. 31st, 1840:—"At the commencement of the present week there are no fewer than 112 prisoners in our county gaol, the *largest number known for a great many years*." Again, the *Hereford Times* of Jan. 16th, 1841, says:—"The Quarter-Sessions for this city takes place on Thursday next; there are an *unusually large number of prisoners for trial*."

But to instance the great and unconquerable horror the poor have of the workhouse, your petitioner knows a distressed widow, with five small children, who repeatedly declares, that before she would go in and be separated from her family, she would take each of her little ones to a block and chop its head off! Another instance is that of a girl, with two illegitimate children, who has already been an inmate of the *Hereford Union Workhouse*, and who now protests, although in a most destitute state, that she would go and lie in a ditch and die, sooner than again enter its precincts!

In short, your petitioner, viewing all these grievous results, and taking into account the immense increase of beggars and other wretched and pitiable objects which the operation of the New Poor-Law has produced, conscientiously believes that no individual in *Hereford*, city or county, (with the exception of the immediate Poor-Law officials, who are enabled by virtue of their offices to fare sumptuously every day—particularly the Union *coffin maker*, who has been so incessantly engaged in his calling that, throughout the winter, he *has been obliged to work on Sundays*)\* has gained by the administration of the Act in question,—far from it.

In conclusion, your petitioner most earnestly implores your Honourable House to show *some commiseration* for the *sufferings of your poorer countrymen*—and *some consideration* for your *country's peace*, which has already, on several occasions, at Birmingham, Newport, Llanidloes, and elsewhere, been seriously endangered, and broken, with bloodshed, by the administration of the harsh principles of the New Poor-Law. He implores your Honourable House to do so, and to throw out this new invention of coercion, this Poor-Law Commissioners' Continuancy Bill—for if it should be passed, *the precious links which now bind society together will assuredly be rudely and violently rent asunder, and the affections of the humbler classes, for ever and ever, alienated from their superiors*.

And your petitioner will ever pray, &c., &c.

## A LETTER

TO THE EDITORS OF THE "SHEFFIELD IRIS."

GENTLEMEN,—You and your thousands of readers, doubtless remember that in your excellent columns of the — of last month, there appeared a copy of an Anti-New Poor-Law petition of mine, which had been presented to the House of Commons, on the 2d inst., by T. S. Duncombe, Esq., M.P. for Finsbury. Now the presentation of this petition, has subsequently kicked up a most unaccountable "dust," among the Board of Guardians, and other friends of skilly and starvation at Hereford, city and county, and many have been the curses and correspondences which have ensued on account thereof. The war of words and Whigs, still continues, with unabated fierceness in the *City of the snobs*, (the *local name* of Hereford,) and vengeance on G. R. Wythen Baxter, is the most familiar shibboleth exchanged by "Union" official lips in the streets.

\* Seven coffins (besides two which had just been fetched away) were being made, as per order, for the Hereford Union, at the coffin makers in ordinary, on Feb. 18, 1841.

The following scriptural, and documental offsprings of my before-mentioned petition are, I opine, like red raspberries, worth preserving. N.B. Number (2.) I consider to be a fancy feather worth wearing in my cap—especially when I had such a “dead pluck,” (as they used to say, when I was at Aula Mag, Oxford,) to get it from one of that order of domestic birds whose necks are none of the shortest.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

Hereford, April 12, 1841.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

(No. 1.)

The Albany, March 12, 1841.

DEAR SIR,—The enclosed I received a few days back, and have forwarded to Captain Bennett a copy of your petition. He is also aware of my sending you his letter, which, after perusing, or copying if you like, I will thank you to return to me.

Yours faithfully,

G. R. Wythen Baxter, Esq.

T. S. DUNCOMBE.

(No. 2.)

King Street, Hereford, March 7, 1841.

SIR,—I am not certain that I need offer any apology for having presumed to address you upon this occasion, unless in doing so, I may be guilty of a breach of etiquette, but having read in the public papers of the 1st inst., statements setting forth, that a petition had been presented to the House of Commons by you, from a Mr. George Baxter, who stated that he had watched the operation of the New Poor-Law, that the cruelty and expense entailed by it were almost beyond endurance, that the rates in Hereford had been raised, from 4s. to 9s. 7½d,—that robbery and incendiarism had increased in consequence,—that many of the poor would rather starve than go into the workhouse,—and that, if it were continued, the lower classes would be completely alienated from their superiors.

Now, Sir, you will be perhaps astonished if I state to you, that the whole of these statements of Mr. Baxter's are wicked, malicious, and malignant falsehoods, and that they are merely got up by an itinerant scribbler, for the purpose of bringing the Poor-Law Act into disrepute, and annoying the Government.

Having been for two years a Guardian for one of the city parishes, and one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Hereford Union, I think it may fairly be presumed, that I am qualified to give an opinion on the subject. And to Mr. Baxter's first assertion, relative to cruelty to the poor, that statement may readily be contradicted, by the evidence of the paupers themselves, as well as the written statements of hundreds of ladies and gentlemen of all ranks, who very frequently visit the house, and enter any remarks relative to the house, the officers, and inmates, in a book kept for that purpose, and who I wish could be examined, by the members of the House of Commons.

Mr. Baxter's next charge states, that the rates in Hereford, had been raised from 4s. to 9s. 7½d. This is absolutely untrue; so far from that being the case, the rates for the last three years, have been decreased one-fourth, or 25 per cent.; for the proof of which I beg to refer you to the printed official statement, which I have this day forwarded to E. B. Clive, Esq., M.P. for this city, and who will, I am sure, be happy to afford you a sight of it.

The next statement is, that robbery and incendiarism *has* increased in consequence. I should like to know whether either has taken place in this county? certainly, like other places, we have our share of petty larcenies; but did none of these occur before the New Poor-Law came into operation? Incendiarism is a crime happily unknown here, but if the population are excited to discontent, by such malevolent scribblers as Mr. George Baxter, I do not know how long it may continue so.



The next of Mr. Baxter's assertions is, that many of the poor would rather starve than go into the workhouse. I grant it, insomuch as the *prostitute*, the *idle*, and the *dissolute*, would doubtless rather (according to the glorious old times), receive 4s. or more per week out-relief, and spend that in a gin-shop, than they would subject themselves to quiet, order, and decent behaviour, though aided by good and wholesome food in the Union workhouse.

The concluding remark of Mr. Baxter's is, that if the present law is continued, the lower classes would be completely alienated from their superiors. I totally deny the assertion. We have in this county a population of hardy, industrious, peasantry, attached to their landlords and employers, generally speaking honest, industrious, and sober, and the only fear is, that such busy, meddling, ignorant scribblers as Mr. George Baxter, may, in time, convert them from useful, honest peasants, to a troublesome, discontented mob.

I hope you will not consider me intrusive, in having stated these things to you, feeling confident as I do, that had you been aware of the facts, you would have hesitated before you had placed before the House, a document which, however unjust and unfounded, was an unfair attack, not only upon the New Poor-Law, but upon me, and the other Guardians of this Union; insomuch as it attaches to us the crime of cruelty to the poor in our charge. Should you, Sir, ever visit this part of the country, or should any of your friends do so, I will engage to disabuse their minds of any prejudice which they may entertain of the system, which, I am happy to say, progresses here with us most favourably.

Begging permission to apologize for the liberty which I have taken, I have the honour to subscribe myself, with every sentiment of respect,

Sir,

Your very obedient, humble servant,

THOMAS BENNETT, *Capt. Royal Navy,*  
and *Vice-Chairman of the Hereford Board of Guardians.*

T. S. Duncombe, Esq., M.P.

(No. 3.)

Hereford, Easton-Place, March 14, 1841.

DEAR SIR,—I was quite prepared to receive the letter you have transmitted me, from a *Mister* Thomas Bennett, who signs himself "*Capt. Royal Navy, and Vice-Chairman of the Hereford Board of Guardians;*" and am rather surprised, from the well-known conduct and conversation of the man, that it was not more abusive than it is. I am, however, as a gentleman, too proud to take any offence at what such a person may say or write: and when I state he (this "*Captain Bold of Halifax*") is a Whig, and holds a subordinate situation under the rascally Commissioners, I think I have returned his abusive salute, to use a sea slang, with an equal number of guns.

But (though I can hardly spare time) to discuss his communication. He says "the whole of these statements of Mr. Baxter's are wicked, malicious, and malignant falsehoods"—I flatter myself that this letter, and its contents, will prove him to be such.

"That they are merely got up by an itinerant scribbler," &c.,—What he intends by an "*itinerant scribbler*," so help me, Murray! I don't know; but, as to bringing the New Poor-Law into disrepute and annoying the Government, I proudly plead guilty—*most guilty, upon my honour*. But to proceed. "Having been for two years a Guardian for one of the city parishes, and one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Hereford Union, I think it may fairly be presumed that I am qualified to give an opinion," &c.—A Whig Poor-Law Commissioners' flunky give an opinion, as to the operation of the Act!! Excellent well!! A Bridgenorth opinion truly!!

"Mr. Baxter's first assertion, relative to cruelty to the poor, that statement

may readily be contradicted by the evidence of the paupers themselves,\* as well as the written statements of hundreds of ladies and gentlemen, &c." What the poor creatures in the Union-house here may be *frightened* to say, through fear of *black holes* and persecution, I cannot say; I dare say plenty of *Whig* ladies and gentlemen may be obtained (at per order), to corroborate and swear anything: their testimony is not worth a farthing. *When wolves make laws for the sheep, the latter are surely the best judges, of whether the same are cruel or not.*

"Mr. Baxter's next charge states, that the rates in Hereford had been raised from 4s. to 9s. 7½d. This is absolutely untrue, &c." The enclosed receipts of rates† paid in 1833 and 1841, are, I conceive, a very good reply. N. B. As for the printed official statements, they are all humbug, and the E. B. Clive, Esq., M.P., spoken of, is father of an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner.‡

\* \* \* \* \*

I cannot conclude this, without expressing my concern, that I should have been the innocent cause of your being troubled with this Whig fellow's impudence.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

T. S. Duncombe, Esq., M.P.

(No. 4.)

## HEREFORD POOR-LAW UNION.||

The following important document has been handed to us for publication:—

"In consequence of a petition having been presented to the House of Commons from a Mr. Baxter, of Hereford, reflecting upon the Corporation of the New Poor-Law, in the Hereford district, and asserting that the rates had been nearly doubled, and including other unfounded charges, the Board of Guardians, at their last meeting, agreed upon the following Petition, to be presented to the House by Mr. Clive:—

"To the Honourable the Commons of England in Parliament assembled,

"The humble Petition of the BOARD OF GUARDIANS of the HEREFORD UNION,

Showeth,—That your Petitioners have heard with much regret and surprise, that a statement has gone forth, that the rate on a tenement in the City of Hereford has been doubled—that infanticide and incendiarism have increased

\* May it, indeed? I should rather fancy not, or why does that poor idiot woman, mad Kate, incessantly stop the Guardians in the street, and, shrieking, inquire "When is the workhouse to be pulled down?" Why have women in a Guardian's shop, when he has in a joke threatened to send them to the workhouse, ejaculated "God bless you, Sir, send us to the gaol; we'd sooner go there!" Why, too, is the door of the "black hole" in the Hereford Union-house, *split and cracked from the kicks and struggles* of the unfortunate creatures who have been confined in its loathsome walls?

† Vide No. 6.

‡ These Extracts from the Hereford papers, &c., corroborative of the increase of crime, are, to avoid repetition, left out, but will be found given in No. 7 of this correspondence.

|| This self-denying ordinance was paraded in the *Hereford Times* of March 13, 1841, and in the *Hereford Journal* of March 17; but several of the stoutest of the Guardians have, ever since, like the magnanimous captain in *Roderick Random*, taken refuge under their wives' flannels, from which place of protection they, every now and then, stretch out their long necks and hiss most melodiously.



—and that unmarried mothers of children have declared that they would rather die in a ditch than go into the Hereford workhouse.

“In reference to the first of these charges, your Petitioners have to observe, that they have no control over the rating of any particular parishes or tenements. It may happen, that by the revision of the rating of an individual house, such a rating may have been increased, but, as regards the whole expenditure of the Hereford Union, a saving of twenty-six per cent. has been effected by the management of your Petitioners on the cost of the system before 1834.

“Your Petitioners have never heard of, and do not believe in, any increase of infanticide or incendiarism within the Hereford Union, since that period.\*

“That the discipline essential to the moral improvement of unmarried mothers of children, and the religious habits which your Petitioners endeavour to establish in the workhouse, may not at first be palatable to those whose lives have been passed in dissolute habits, can by no means surprise your Petitioners. They, however, beg to assure your Honourable House, that they believe fewer offences and greater comforts exist in the Hereford workhouse than in any other establishment of the kind, with which your Petitioners are acquainted.

“Your Petitioners have devoted their best efforts towards rendering the workhouse available to the comforts, welfare, and moral improvement of the inmates, and a more frequent and strict supervision of the house takes place on the part of the Guardians, than in any other workhouse known to them.

“Your Petitioners have, since the building of the workhouse, not only given ample opportunities to all respectable persons to visit the workhouse at all reasonable hours, but a book is presented to all visitors for the insertion of remarks; and your Petitioners find the highest praise given to the officers and arrangements of the house, by almost every visitor.

“Your Petitioners beg leave further to state, that while discontent and disturbance have prevailed in many parts of the kingdom, more or less remote from the City of Hereford, no riotous assemblages, Chartist meetings, or other disorders, have taken place in the district over which their duties extend.†

\* The Hereford Guardians (*vel geese*) have never heard of infanticides occurring in Herefordshire since the introduction of the Act, of course; suppose they were to read the following, and bottle up their hiss, hiss, hiss, for their own use:—

“Committed to our county gaol, Mary Evans, charged with the wilful murder of her infant child, at the parish of Little Hereford.”—*Hereford County Press*, Sept. 22, 1838.

“There are at present about sixteen prisoners for trial at our ensuing Assizes, which commence on the 23d. Among them is one (a female) charged with child murder.”—*Ibid.*, March 16, 1839.

“On Wednesday an inquest was held by Peter Warburton, Esq., on the body of an infant found in St. Owen’s burying ground, as stated in our last, but there was no evidence to show how it came by its death, nor by whom it was placed there.”—*Ibid.*, April 4, 1840.

And in addition to these, there are the two instances of child-murder, and for concealing the birth, tried at the Hereford Spring Assizes, 1841, and many, *too many*, concealed horrid affairs of the sort, which are never disclosed, but which, no doubt, have been entered in the leaves of that awful book which, when opened hereafter, the Hereford Guardians will find themselves called upon to answer for the spilling of the innocent blood. But, talking of infanticide, since this was written, their own paper (edited by a very good fellow, though a Whig) has had the honesty to blush for their enormous lying, and to speak the truth—“That infanticide has lately increased, is a fact which the late Assizes throughout the country have demonstrated.”—*Hereford Times*, April 17, 1841.

† What an infamous falsehood! *There have been several Chartist meetings held in the city of Hereford*, and one, March 15, 1839, when Messrs. Vincent and Burns made speeches under the market-place. No riotous assemblages! What a ditto! Ye most obedient, humble servants of Somerset-house, read this:—

“It is with great regret we are this week forced, in the performance of our duty as journalists, to notice a threatened disturbance in this neighbourhood. It was widely reported, that on Wednesday last, a party of labourers from Aconbury, Aymestry, and adjoining parishes and townships, would visit this city, armed with pickaxes and billhooks, with the riotous design of wreaking their vengeance upon the Union workhouse just completed, and now inhabited by the indigent poor (*cursed cant*) in this city and neighbourhood. What ground there was for the apprehension, further than report, we have been unable to learn; but it seems the authorities have reposed so much faith in the threatened tumult and riot, that additional constables were sworn in, and assembled at the county gaol; to be ready to act in case any riotous assemblage had taken place.”—*Hereford County Press*, March 24, 1838.

"Your Petitioners have respectfully to assure your Honourable House, that they are resolved to persevere, with impartiality and firmness, and without fear, favour, or affection, in the arduous and unpopular task of relieving destitution, of detecting imposition, of discouraging profligacy, and of raising the moral character, and the physical condition, of the lower orders.\* Through good report and evil report, your Petitioners will continue to execute the duties entrusted to them, in the fullest confidence that the enlightened and reflecting portion of the community will not be swayed by vague accusations or unfounded statements.

"And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

"Signed, on behalf of the Board of Guardians of the Hereford Union,

"WATSON JOSEPH THORNTON,

"Chairman of the Hereford Union."

(No. 5.)

### THE POOR-LAWS.†

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HEREFORD TIMES."

SIR,—I have seen a copy of a Parliamentary petition, from an individual in Hereford, against the New Poor-Law, which, if it were taken as a specimen of the opposition to that law, would tend strongly to establish the perfection of the Act. The petitioner, among other *romantic* statements, seriously assures the House of Commons, that he had heard unmarried mothers of children (how delicate the description!) vow they would rather die in a ditch than go into the Hereford Union workhouse. Marvellous, indeed! Is it not surprising, Sir, that the ladies of the *pavé*‡ should not have fine mansions erected for them at the public expense, and is it not abominable, that our city and county gaols should not afford the highest luxuries for our criminals? I have heard of convicts vowing that they would rather be transported than be caged by Mr.

\* This, I presume, is Messrs. the Hereford Guardians (*vel geese*) your recipe, your tried efficacious recipe for raising the moral character and the physical condition of the lower orders:—it does raise them indeed—it raises them to heaven, where they will find few, if any, Poor-Law officials:—

"DEATH BY DESTITUTION.—A poor old man, named John Hill, was, on Sunday last, discovered dead in his bed, in a room, the use of which was kindly allowed him, in a house used for his business only, by Mr. Winter, butcher, St. Owen's-street, in this city. He was seen for the last time on the previous Thursday, and must, from the state of the body when found, have been dead some time. An inquest was held over his remains by Mr. T. T. Gough, and a verdict, 'Died from the want of the common necessities of life,' returned."—*Hereford County Press*, Sept. 1, 1838.

Remember all this perfidious gammon of raising the moral fiddle-stick will not wipe off, from the heads of those who let him perish, this poor old man's blood—'twill be upon them and upon their children. Nor will these well got-up feeding paragraphs induce the poor and helpless to deem the Bastiles otherwise than, what they are all over the kingdom, licensed slaughter-houses and starvation prisons:—

"The inmates of the Hereford Union, 66 in number, were regaled (*how well it sounds on paper!*) with good roast beef and plum-pudding for dinner on the day of the Queen's coronation at the expense of the Board of Guardians (*query, the rate-payers?*)"—*Hereford County Press*, June 30, 1838.

"On Christmas-day, Mr. Preece the respectable (?) and highly-efficient (no doubt) master of our (how affectionate!) Union workhouse, kindly gave the poor inmates, 170 in number, a plentiful (?) dinner of excellent (?) roast beef and plum-pudding at his own expense" (*query, rate-payers?*)—*Ibid.*, Jan. 12, 1839.

The poor, perhaps, could, if they dared, tell how *romantic* these paid paragraphs, of which above a dozen are inserted per annum, in the Hereford papers, were and are! Would that the deaths by destitution already detailed could be proved to be romances of a like description!

† This elegant extract perfumed and added fragrance to the *Hereford Times* of March 13, 1841.

‡ As for the ladies of the *pavé*, it is well known that they, perchance, through their former commercial relations with the officials, are much better treated in the Hereford Union workhouse, than the old and respectable folk who are taken in and done for.



Keene;\* and others vowing that they would be rather hanged than transported: and such persons regret, that in the erection of prisons, the feelings and wishes of thieves and cut-throats are not consulted. As to the workhouses, they ought not to be places of indiscriminate refuge for the poor and the *mothers* of illegitimate children—such mothers are, in a large majority of cases, most abandoned characters, and it is unjust and cruel to the virtuous poor, young and old, to bring them in daily contact with habitual vice. That such profligate characters should swear that they would rather die in a ditch than go into the workhouse, where they must lead a new life, that is, live morally, while they live at the expense of the hard-working rate-payer, is quite natural; but the marvel is, that any person should evince such insanity, to describe it *very mildly*, as to be the petitioning mouth-piece of these matrons!—it is one of the many wonders of the day. Would that all the wives of the independent labourers in this county had equal comforts before and after their *accouchements*, as the unmarried mothers enjoy in the Hereford workhouse.

Hundred of Broxash,

ANTI-VICE.†

March 10th, 1840.

\* The designation, I believe, of the governor or turnkey of the Hereford county gaol.

† The veritable writer of this original article, signed with the Christian name of "*Anti*" and the surname of *Vice*, although his manly modesty prevented him attaching his baptismals to it, is, I fancy, the distinguished naval and New Poor-Law penman of No. 2, and the talented author of the following exquisite performance, which appeared in the *Court Journal* of March 27, 1841:—

"THE PRINCESS ROYAL.—We have received several letters on the subject of a most malicious rumour which concerns this illustrious personage. It has been stated, that her Royal Highness is blind, and of imperfect intellect; but we can assure our readers, and the public generally, that the princess can see quite as well as the best of them, and that, in *mental capacity*, she is gifted beyond her age!!"

It may not, perhaps, be amiss, as he has recently made himself so conspicuous, to attach a short historiette of this remarkable and highly-gifted individual. This "*great ammiral*" in expectation, then, is the son and heir of a gentleman of respectability, formerly the sole proprietor of certain *iron works* in the city of Hereford, which, though they were not quite so extensive as those now in the possession of Messrs. Bailey and Crayshaw, were still considered worth *firing at*, and by their genial glow his sire pursued, with "*hard knocks*," the profession of that lame and impotent deity, the husband of the Olympic Vestris, who, according to the blind fiddler Homerus, in handing round the Milford oysters and bottled "*malt*" at the *cæna, noctesque deûm*, so frequently caused the whole house of gods to resound with *ironical* cheers. Well, our "*great ammiral's*" father was one of those enterprising individuals who have always more than *one iron in the fire* at a time, and who are ever ready, at the shortest notice, and for the dedication of the requisite "*tip*," to take horse exercise (not for their health, but for their interest), and accommodate any farmer's "*dobbin*" roadster with "*two for his heels*," but not "*one for his nob*." The nativity of our hero, the "*great ammiral*" was, of course, like the "*natus sum vel fui*" of every other illustrious character, since the world began to bake twopenny *busters*, signalized by the perpetration of sundry illustrative prodigies and extraordinary occurrences; for, at his birth, independent of the turnpike-roads being woolly and whipeord a scarcity,

"The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,"

which ascended by hundreds from the chimney of his father's smithy, and

"The 'smiths' run from the 'forges,' and the 'colts'  
Were strangely 'kicking' in the affrighted streets!"

But to proceed. Our hero was originally intended to have been *brought up to the bar*; but, not liking the *sparks* he daily associated with in his father's company, he refused to tread in his *father's shoes*, and, hissing hot, volunteered in the sea service; but aboard ship, howbeit, it is whispered, though indisputably the bravest of the brave, he still retained his early abhorrence of that *metal* which it was his sire's wont to belabour, blast, and beat, from morning's sun to dewy eve, so unmercifully, and he never permitted, in the greatest victory, *hot or cold iron to approach too near his person if he could help it*. From time immemorial it has been the esteemed practice of biographers, in their pages, to "*show up*" their monsters as having been in the undisputed possession of penchants and idiosyncracies peculiar to themselves, and which the poor devils of common-place could not by any manner of means have about them, if they were to cry their eyes out, and pawn their Sunday's breeches. Our hero, "*the ammiral*," was not wanting in these respects—indeed, he was pre-eminently and prodigally endowed therewith. To give a few of his "*characteristic traits*." In the first

## A LETTER

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HEREFORD JOURNAL."\*

SIR,—In the *Hereford Times* of last Saturday, I perceive the Hereford Board of Guardians have deemed it becoming to advertize a table, setting forth the *great saving* which, they contend, has occurred since the introduction of the New Poor-Law in these parts.

Now, what does this document, "fearfully made," and duly signed by N. Lanwarne, Clerk to the Board, prove? Why, nothing more nor less than that, if the saving in question *have* taken place, the poor must have been deprived of a great portion of their *lawful* allowance—that allowance contributed by the rate-payers for *their* support; and not for the salaries of officials with large pockets; and that they (the said poor) must have had their hearts pierced, and their bellies pinched, in a most cruel and unchristianlike manner, to have achieved the same. Surely the wants of the pauper in 1840, since the passing of the "Act," were as pressing as the wants of the pauper in 1833, previous to the passing of the "Act;" and surely there were as many paupers in the former year as in the latter—a *great many more*, I should say.

Then what conclusion can be deduced from this "round table" (*round robbing?*) in question? Simply, that the poor and helpless have either been driven into the perpetration of crime to support themselves, or they have been "tested" out of existence, and so got rid of. One or the other it must be.

But supposing this "table" to be correct—(I only suppose it, mind that)—that the cost for the maintenance of the poor has been less in the three years succeeding the administration of the New Poor-Law, than it was in the three years preceding the administration thereof, it by no means proves that the *rates have been diminished, or that the rate-payers have paid less*. It only authenticates, that, contrary to Scripture words, "the '*rich*' have been filled with good things, while the '*hungry*' have been sent empty away!"

Can the Hereford Guardians, without stretching out their long necks, and having recourse to personalities—can they declare that the householders of the parishes within their Union generally, have paid *less rates*? I challenge them—I dare

place, then, he possesses a thorough-bred and undisguised abomination of lamb or mutton, because those agricultural productions, when alive, are in the habit of enunciating the, to him, disgusting monosyllable of *baa*, or *bar* as he fancies it. Secondly, he never, on any persuasion, purchases any goods or chattels *too cheap*, as he perfectly abhors bargains. Thirdly, he has never yet been known to sojourn in his native city during the season of the holding of the Assizes or Quarter-sessions, for he would as lief meet a bear without a muzzle, as a gent. of the *bar*. Fourthly, when he travels, and has occasion to frequent inns or public-houses, he scrupulously avoids ingress to that portion of the buildings generally set apart by the landlords for the keep of their lasses and glasses. Fifthly, he cannot abide dogs or oak-trees, as the former *bark*, and the latter are *barked*. Sixthly, there are three baronets and one baron residing in his neighbourhood, who are continually importuning him to know and patronize them, and he *won't*. Seventhly, on one occasion, when one of the audience at a theatre, at the enactment of *Othello*, no sooner did Desdemona impart to Mrs. Iago, who was undoing her things previous to her going to bed, that her

"Mother had a maid call'd *Barbara*,"

than our hero, the "*ammiral*," uttering an hysteric cry, rushed from the temple of Thespis, as if Edwin Chadwick's uncle, the very devil, was scouring after him with the intention of catching him, and dishing him up that very night, with sulphur sauce, for his supper! But enough. Long may this wonderful salt warrior man be spared to serve his Queen and country as an alderman of the *Hereford Town Council*, and as a *Guardian of the Hereford Board of Guardians*; and when he dies, may his latter end be that of a great naval commander; i. e., by *sea-sickness*, and not in a *blacksmith's shop*!

\* This appeared in the *Hereford Journal*, March 21, 1811, and subsequently, a great portion of it appeared in No. 24 of my friend Oastler's "*Fleet Papers*."



them to prove it. They cannot. There is G. R. Wythen Baxter's gage thrown down, they will pick it up if they are *men*.\*

The following copies of receipts of Poor's Rates paid by my father in 1833, and by my father and self jointly in 1841, will proclaim that the "Board" table is anything but a credible one:—

(1.)

"Received of Mr. Baxter, Poor's Rate for the Parish of St. Martin, in the City of Hereford, made the 9th of May, 1833.

"House and Garden . . . . . £0 4s. 0d.

"CHARLES LUCY, *Assistant-Overseer*."

\* It is needless to say the challenge thrown down in this letter was not accepted; it looked too much like "*work*" for the capacities of the Hereford Guardians (*vel geese*), and they, with tears in their eyes, and on their bended drumsticks, piteously implored—"Hold, enough!" In a word, they could no more: look on it again, they dared not, but, with a snivel, confessed that their bellies were full—they had had their *gruel*. But,

Quod non fecerunt Goti,  
Hoc fecerunt Scoti.

What the Hereford Board feared to do (*i. e.*, to prove *truth to be a lie*), that the Ledbury Board dared to undertake. Yes, the pauper worriers of lewd, licentious, *liberal* Ledbury, stepped into the rescue of their Malthusian brethren of the *city of the snobs*. On the 16th of March, 1841, the Chairman of the Ledbury Board, a clerk of *no importance*, having previously had an illicit intercourse with the Assistant-Commissioner of the district, who, under promise of marriage—no, but under promise of sousing him up to his great *red ears* in the grease of a fat living, had seduced and crammed him, was suddenly taken in labour of a "praise-bare-bones Poor-Law speech, and was delivered of the same (the aforesaid Assistant-Commissioner acting as man midwife) in the presence of the assembled billy and bearded goats, Guardians of the Ledbury Union. This bantling address, it was proclaimed by every Union goat and goose in Herefordshire, would soon settle *Baxter*, and all such mischievous agitators; and to be enabled to perform its part of agitatoricide more effectually, on the 17th of the following April, it appeared, breeched as a book, and dressed up as a pamphlet. And prettily it prattled! and bravely its author brazened out his lost virginity of human feelings, and well in every line he earned the living (to which he will shortly be gazetted), for which he had sacrificed his veracity. The law was perfect—*too perfect*—its perfection was almost beyond endurance. The Commissioners, central and circulating, were angels in French boots, but, like angels, alas! *there were too few of them*: and then, as for the gore of Coroners' inquests upon their heads and hands, it was very gentlemanly, and more *becoming* than anything else. Instances of bastardy, under the new "amendment" order of things, were most *chastely uncommon*; only one illegitimate child had been born (*vide Commissioners' last report*), in England and Wales, since the introduction of the Act, to the present time, and that had been preserved and pickled, and presented, as a *great curiosity, to the museum of the Hereford Literary and Philosophical Institution*. The savings which had accrued from the administration of the New Poor-Law, were so *excessive*, as to be almost troublesome: there had been a decrease of expenditure, within these three years, of *ten hundred thousand and sixty-five and a-half millions, per each year, in Isle of Sky and Bank of Air notes*. These were official statements: could any one have the hardihood to call their veracity in question? And then the working of the *dear law* in Herefordshire (oh! what did that *Baxter* deserve!) had been the very reverse of kill pauper and rob rate-payer; on the contrary, it had been administered with spoonsful, night and morning, of soothing syrup, and almond demulsion—with nods, becks, and wreathed smiles, and by the most humane and lovely lived of men, and not (oh! what ought not that *Baxter* to be done to?) with black holes, and black looks, and by black guards. So in the country had it made itself beloved, and in the city of Hereford, especially, it had made itself adored. There was once a farmer who wished his son, howbeit not over clever in courting matters, to make up to a certain pretty virginity, and, as the parent expressed it, to *say something soft to her*. The next time the obedient son met the fair damsel in question, he went up to her, and in a marvellous small voice, whispered, "*Mashed potatoes, Miss!*" In Hereford, then; it had regularly proved mashed potatoes itself!

Brave Guardians (*vel geese*) of Hereford, who have suffered many times and oft from *Baxter's* lash, with grateful hearts, turn to him, the Chairman of the Ledbury Board, who has thus so kindly kissed your parts, and made them well:—

"However successful the operation of this bill, and however discreet and humane the Guardians may be, their faithful discharge of duty affords them no security against animadversion. I see that the Hereford Union, with its *admirable* workhouse economy, has not escaped; the Guardians, in a counter-petition (*vide* No. 4) to Parliament, have been compelled to justify their regulations against the sweeping charges of an individual, not, I believe, a member of the Board."—"The Practical Working of the Poor-Laws in Herefordshire," by the *Rev. J. H. Underwood, Chairman of the Ledbury Board of Guardians*, spoke March 16, 1841; published the 17th of April following. [NOTA BENE.—This Underwood, like "this Cloten, was a fool."]

(2.)

“Parish of St. Martin, Hereford. Received the 29th day of February, 1841, of Messrs. Baxter, *Nine Shillings and Sevenpence Halfpenny.*

“LEMUEL LEWELLYN, *Collector.*”

I take this opportunity of calling upon all those rate-payers who have had their rates thus increased, to come forward, and, in a like manner, publicly corroborate the fact.

I cannot conclude this communication without relating an instance—a barbarous, brutal instance, illustrative of the way in which the savings of *relief* expenditure, so boasted of, are effected under the New Poor-Law. This evening, (Saturday, March 20, 1841,) a respectable young woman, Caroline Garstone, wife of Thomas Garstone, a turner and carpenter, lodging in a house in St. Martin's-street, four doors from my own residence, called upon me in great distress, and almost broken hearted, and told me that her infant child had died three days ago, and that her husband having, unfortunately, been ten weeks out of work, and they having been almost without food for some days past, they could not bury it. She said, in the morning she had been to the Board of Guardians, and requested them to allow her a trifle to bury the child. This they refused her. She then, to use her own piteous words, implored of them, as a mother only can implore, to “give her a bit of ground only,” and she and her husband would try and bury it themselves. This also was refused her; and she was told she and her husband must come into the house, and then the child would be buried—otherwise, she might go about her business, as they wouldn't assist her. The Chairman, she said, had asked her what her husband's trade was, and upon being informed that he was a carpenter, he declared that he was the very man they wanted in the house, as he would be very *useful* (*i. e.*, to make the coffins!). The poor young woman protested, she and her husband couldn't come into the house—indeed, that she had not asked relief for themselves, but only for a small trifle with which to bury their dead babe.

The conclusion was, she obtained no assistance, and was ultimately obliged to solicit subscriptions from door to door of the charitable neighbours, and she was driven (in a city in which there are a cathedral and three churches, mark!) to the necessity of begging an old orange box, with which the father, the sad tears trickling down his cheeks, late on Saturday night, *actually made a coffin for his own child!*

So much for the means by which savings are achieved under the administration of the New Poor-Amendment-Act! I blush for its supporters, and am proud to be numbered among its active—most active opponents.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

Easton Place, Hereford,  
March 20, 1841.

## COPY OF A PETITION.\*

(No. 7.)

“To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom, in Parliament now assembled.

“The Petition of GEORGE ROBERT WYTHEN BAXTER, of the City of Hereford, Gentleman,

\* House of Commons, March 29, 1841.—“Mr. T. Duncombe presented a petition from Mr. Baxter, of Hereford, maintaining the truth of his statements contained in a former petition, of the great increase of crime in that county since the passing of the New Poor-Law.—*Times*, March 30, 1841.



“Showeth,—That on the 1st inst., a memorial from your petitioner, complaining of the cruel, demoralizing, and expensive operation of the New Poor-Law, in the agricultural county of Hereford, was presented to your Honourable House.

“That the purport of that memorial was, that rates and crime (more particularly infanticide, bastardy, sheep-stealing, and incendiarism), had alarmingly increased since the introduction of the New Poor-Law Act.

“That, immediately on the news of the presentation of your petitioner’s memorial reaching Hereford, a fearful sensation arose amongst the friends and favourers of the New Poor-Law in that city—a sensation which has not since subsided—and the Board of Guardians incontinently proceeded to hold a sage and sorrowful deliberation on the subject, and, in the end, a counter-petition was adopted, which has subsequently (as they themselves have advertised,) been presented to your Honourable House by one of the members for the City of Hereford, Mr. Bolton Clive, who is likewise father to an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner.

“That this counter-petition of the Hereford Guardians denounced, in no measured terms, the statements made by your petitioner with regard to the baneful effects of the administration of the New Poor-Law in Herefordshire, and stigmatized the same as entirely unfounded and unworthy of belief.

“That your Petitioner, not choosing—particularly as he has at present a history of the working of the New Poor-Law in the press—to have his character for veracity traduced and lied away in such a summary and malevolent manner, by a body of men, officials and partizans, notoriously interested in suppressing, if possible, all disclosures likely to militate against their favourite and profitable code—respectfully begs to lay before your Honourable House the following local quotations and statistics, corroborative of the verity of his former relations.

“Firstly, as regards the increase of crime generally :—

“‘In Herefordshire, there is an increase of crime of 12.5 per cent.’—*Companion to the Almanac*, 1841.

“‘At the commencement of the present week there were no fewer than 112 prisoners in our county gaol, the largest number known for a great many years.’—*Hereford Journal*, Dec. 30, 1840.

“‘HEREFORD EPIPHANY SESSIONS.—The Chairman regretted to say, that the number of prisoners *was large*—nearly as large as on any previous occasion since he had had the honour of presiding at the Sessions.’—*Ibid*, Jan. 6, 1841.

“‘The Quarter-sessions for this city takes place on Thursday next; there are an *unusually large number* of prisoners for trial.’—*Hereford Times*, Jan. 16, 1841.

“Secondly, as regards the increase of infanticide :—

“‘Gentlemen, I now come to call your attention to two cases, which are, perhaps, the most serious in the calendar, viz., in the first of those cases, the prisoner is charged with the wilful murder of a newborn child; and the charge in the second, is that of concealing the birth.’—*Mr. Justice Coleridge’s Charge to the Grand Jury at the Hereford Spring Assizes*, March 25, 1841.

“‘CHARGE OF INFANTICIDE.—A young girl, about 16 years of age, named Caroline Jennings, was apprehended on Tuesday, on the charge of having destroyed her infant, about a fortnight old, by throwing it into the Wye, near Clock Mill.’—*Hereford Times*, March 27, 1841.\*

“Thirdly, as regards the increase of sheep-stealing :—

“‘In consequence of the alarming extent to which this crime has been carried on in several parishes in the neighbourhood, an association has been formed in the parish of St. Weonards, for the purpose of endeavouring to suppress it.’—*Hereford Journal*, Jan. 6, 1841.

\* *Vide* Part II. of this work—Section, *Bastardy*.

“ ‘SHEEP-STEALING.—This species of crime appears to be on the increase in this neighbourhood.’—*Hereford Times*, Jan. 16, 1841.

“ ‘Early on Saturday morning last, a sheep, the property of Mr. Robert Davis, butcher, was found killed in a meadow at the top of Ailstone Hill, near this city. Two shoulders, and part of the leg, were taken away.’—*Hereford Times*, March 13, 1841.

“ ‘SHEEP-STEALING.—On Friday last, Mr. Veny, of Everson, in the parish of Peterstow, had a fine wether sheep stolen. A reward of ten pounds is offered for the apprehension of the offenders.’—*Hereford Times*, March 20, 1841.\*

“ ‘Fourthly, as regards the increase of incendiarism, the Vice-Chairman of the Hereford Board of Guardians having declared that incendiarism is *unknown* in Herefordshire :—

“ ‘PETERCHURCH.—Late on Monday evening last, as Mr. Jones, and a lad, were returning to the vicarage, they discovered a wheat rick, the property of Mr. John Baughan, of Showell, parish of Madley, to be in flames ; they immediately gave an alarm, and speedily obtained assistance. The fire had, however, gained too much ascendancy, and the whole, containing from twelve to fourteen loads of wheat, was entirely consumed. A reward of £20 is offered for the discovery of the perpetrator or perpetrators, it being considered that the firing was the act of an incendiary.’—*Hereford Times*, March 13, 1841.

“ ‘Fifthly, as regards the increase of rates, the Hereford Guardians having publicly advertised that a saving of 25 per cent. had taken place ; the following are copies of receipts of rates paid by your petitioner’s father in 1833, before the passing of the New Poor-Law, and by your petitioner and his father for the same tenement, being a house and garden, in 1841, after the passing of the New Poor-Law :—

(1.)

“ ‘Received of Mr. Baxter, Poor’s-Rate for the Parish of St. Martin, in the City of Hereford, made the 9th of May, 1833 :—

“ ‘House and Garden . . . . £0 4s. 0d.

“ ‘CHARLES LUCY, *Assistant Overseer.*”

(2.)

“ ‘Parish of St. Martin, Hereford Received, the 29th day of February, 1841, of Messrs. Baxter, Nine Shillings and Sevenpence Halfpenny.

“ ‘LEMUEL LLEWELLYN, *Collector.*”

“ ‘In conclusion, your petitioner begs respectfully to state, that he has been induced to bring the foregoing facts, corroborative of his former statements, before your Honourable House, in order to clear his character from the impeachment of factiousness and falsehood, which the Hereford Board of Guardians have *presumed* to make against it ; and, in so doing, he (your petitioner) beseeches your Honourable House to institute a proper investigation of the operation of the New Poor-Law in the city and county of Hereford, and then your petitioner flatters himself that his declarations will be found to be very correct.

“ ‘And your petitioner will ever pray, &c.”

\* “ ‘FIVE POUNDS REWARD.—Stolen, sometime last night, or early this morning (Monday), from a field adjoining the Madley turnpike road, in the parish of Clehonger, two yearling wether sheep, the property of Mrs. Tunstall, of the Bowling Green. The skins and entrails were left in the field.’—*Handbill*, March 29, 1841.





PART II.

*Instances of Cruelty, Statistics, Authorities, &c.*



## ADVERTISEMENT TO PART II.

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It was originally the intention of the Author to have amalgamated the following portion of this work into a mass of his own, and, after the general and greatly esteemed manner of the serving-men and waiting-maids of to-day's literature, to have subdivided the same into chapters. But, as that method of the "trade" of working other people's stuff into a consistency of their own, would, in this instance, have materially increased the bulk of the volume, without bringing any additional interest or information for the perusal of the reader, the idea of "making up" the matter has been abandoned, and the present mode of giving facts, scraps, figures, quotations, &c., simply as he found them, adopted by the Author.

Besides, as in the previous department of the work, he (the Author) has "let off" a reasonable sufficiency of his own "brave words," he deemed it but fair that others of the New Poor-Law Opposition should enjoy a like privilege of speaking their sentiments, and in their own language, without addition, or molestation; and, to the attent peruser, it will be seen that in the excerpts given from their speeches, pamphlets, &c., they have done so well and wisely, and without requiring any artistical arrangement, or ornamental grouping of their parts of speech, from the pen and ink of the Author of this work.

With regard to the statistics, instances of cruelty, and other matters of fact, published in this collection—they are too stubborn, and too true, to have admitted, under any system of arrangement, the remotest degree of embellishment, but, like the nine nymphs of Parnass, who used in the good old times to dance in naked sincerity of form to the thrills of Apollo's flute, are, when unadorned—

"Adorned the most!"

At the end of the sections, called the "*Opinions of the Poor-Law Opposition*," there is a letter from the Bishop of Exeter, containing a disavowal on his Lordship's part, of ever having uttered a certain speech against the New-Poor Law, which has been attributed to him, and which disavowal his Lordship has particularly requested the Author of this work to insert, and call public attention to.

## ANTIPATHY OF DESTITUTE PAUPERS TO GO INTO THE UNION WORKHOUSES.

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"The pauper palace *which they hate to see!*"—CRABBE.

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"I can say with truth that I know of *several deaths* having occurred from the workhouse test. I have seen many families submitting to the severest privations rather than go into one of those prisons."—*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Smith Marriott to the Author, dated Horsmonden, Tunbridge, Feb. 10, 1841.*

"During an inquest an other day, before Mr. Wakley, M.P., that gentleman stated, that in the course of official inquiries, he repeatedly met with instances of the extreme dislike paupers entertained to going into the workhouses for relief. On Saturday last he held two inquests, at Stepney, on persons who had died of destitution; and he was told that both of them had *invariably refused*, though advised, to seek for indoor relief. The inquest was on the shockingly-emaciated body of a female, who was upwards of 80 years old, and who appeared to have been literally starved to death."—*Champion, Feb. 16, 1840.*

"During the last winter, there had been considerable depredations committed in the county of Sussex, which he thought had been caused by a *terror* of the workhouse."—*Lord Colchester in the House of Lords, March 20, 1838.*

"THE PENCYD SUICIDE.—A poor old man, named Thomas Williams, said to have been eighty-five years of age, wilfully hanged himself with a halter, on the 25th ult., in a millhouse near where he lodged at Pencoyd, from a *dread* of being removed into the Ross Union workhouse. At the inquest on the body the jury returned a verdict, that he, T. W., did wilfully hang and murder himself in consequence of the horror and dread which he had of going into the Ross Union workhouse."—*Hereford County Press, Sept. 8, 1838.*

"In the parish of Bourne, in Lincolnshire, a poor man who was out of work applied to the Guardians of the poor for relief. They offered him admission into one of the Union workhouses. He declared he would *rather die* than enter such a place, and refused to accept the offer. Within a week afterwards the man was

found dead in a field, having absolutely chosen to submit to death by starvation, than enter one of the workhouses established under the present system."—*Genl. Johnson, at the Crown and Anchor, Feb. 9, 1838.*

"A poor old man, named Benjamin Hammond, hanged himself lately at Epping, in Essex, rather than be imprisoned in a Bastile."—*Northern Star, Feb. 23, 1839.*

"The general feeling of the poor is, that they will *rather starve, or commit suicide*, than go into these prisons, and many are willing to emigrate."—*Extract of a Letter from Mr. John Perceval to Mr. Oastler, dated from Kent, Feb. 18, 1838.*

"There is in Nottingham a poor family, a father, a mother, and two children; the mother is near her confinement. A few weeks ago, they were found by a friend of mine, in an old cellar, a lump of dirty straw in a corner on the brick floor was their only bed—a dirty rag, their only covering—a chair and a few broken pots, composed the rest of their furniture. They could get no work, no relief,—they were offered the accursed Bastile. But they *had been 'tested,'* my Lord! And they *preferred to die and starve* out of the House, rather than again submit to the Devil's 'test.'"—*Oastler's Letter to Lord John Russell, March 3, 1838.*

"I have before me an account of a circumstance related by General Johnson, M.P., of a poor man who had a wife and three children. He applied to the Poor-Law Guardians for relief. They offered him the workhouse, and, having been distrained upon by his landlord, he was compelled to go there with his wife and children. How long he remained there, he (*General Johnson*) did not know, but he believed not more than three weeks. Having left the workhouse, and being unable to maintain himself and family, he applied to the Magistrates at the Petty Sessions at Bourne, for relief or work: they told him they had no power to order him work. The parish continued to



refuse him relief, but offered him the workhouse again. The man declared before the Magistrates, that he would *rather murder his children, and cut his own throat*, than go into the workhouse again. Bear in mind, he had been in about three weeks, but such was the horror of it, that he appears to have preferred murder and suicide to a continuance in such a place. Another circumstance stated by General Johnson was, that not long ago he was applied to, as a Justice of the Peace, by a working man for relief or work. He told him, that the power to dispense the one or find the other, was taken out of his hands, and that he must apply to the Poor-Law Guardians. The man's answer was, *You tell me to go to the Guardians—I would rather die. Within a week the man was found dead in a ditch.*—*Rev. W. V. Jackson's Sermon on the New Poor-Law, preached Feb. 18, 1838.*

"Why, I apprehend, that we have hundreds of cases in which the poor, perishing creatures—aged men and aged women—dare not open their mouths to those who are starving them to death (*they will perish before they will go into prison*)! half their former pittance is taken from them—if they dared to open their mouths, the answer would be, 'You shall have no more out relief; come in.' They of course refuse, and die, so the blessed Union saves the money. I know of these cases, though the Guardians hear nothing of them—they, therefore, cry out, 'the Bill works well!'—*Mr. Roberts's "Mary Wilden; a Victim to the New Poor-Law."* 1839.

"Q. As you say that within your observation the rate of wages of a single man has been lowered, in consequence of the operation of the Poor-Law, the Committee will be naturally desirous of knowing how that effect is produced?—*A. By the dread of the Poor-house.*"—*Examination of the Rev. T. Sockett before the Poor-Law Committee, March, 1837.*

"By Mr. Wakley—Q. Are you able of your own knowledge to state the *minimum* amount of wages which a labourer would consent to receive before he would go into a Union workhouse?—*A. No; but my opinion is that he would be ground down to almost anything!*"—*Ibid.*

"As a commercial traveller was passing from Wragby to Lincoln, on Tuesday last, when about a mile west of the former place, he came up with a party who were bearing to Wragby a female apparently in the last state of exhaustion: on inquir-

ing, he was told that she had been found in a hole in a haystack. The poor creature was scarcely able to articulate answers to his interrogatories; but, at length, explained that some trifling misbehaviour had induced her to run away from her situation three weeks ago; that she had hid herself in the stack, where she had remained ever since, coming out only at nights to satiate her extreme hunger; and that she had fed on the grass of an adjacent field: eventually her strength failed her, and for several days she had been unable to move from her hiding-place. She was scented out by a dog, whose owner being attracted to the spot, by the animal's barking and whining, discovered the girl in her deplorable state. She is eighteen years of age, and states, as a reason for her singular conduct, *that she feared being sent to the Union.*"—*Liverpool Standard, July 16, 1839.*

"Mr. Fielden, the Member for Oldham, has succeeded by his agents in discovering men who avowed they had turned sheep-stealers and thieves of lesser degree, *"rather than go to the Bastile;"* and we can avouch as a fact, that a pauper, on lately coming out of a Union workhouse not far distant from Halifax, declared that, if on the coming winter he could not maintain himself, *rather than go to the Bastile again*, he would commit some slight depredation in the hope of being committed to Wakefield during the winter months."—*Halifax Guardian, July 18, 1840.*

"I had a letter from Sussex early in this year, saying that a gang of about seventeen sheep-stealers had been discovered; about nine were found guilty and transported or imprisoned: 'Yet!' said my informant, 'the people are determined to *do anything rather than enter the Bastiles*; and two or three sheep are stolen weekly.'"—*Extract of a Letter from Mr. John Perceval to the Author, dated Kensington, August 13, 1840.*

"Here is the appalling fact, that the New Poor-Law is indirectly demoralizing a very large proportion of children, whose destitute parents, *rather than encounter the persecutions of a Whig workhouse*, permit them to become habitual thieves."—*Times, August 21, 1840.*

"It is not very long ago since an industrious and well-behaved labourer, in the neighbourhood of Birmingham, having become involved in debt and misery during a long illness, was driven into such a state of despondency, by the *anticipated separa-*

tion and imprisonment of himself and family in a Union gaol, that, in a moment of frantic agony, he strangled all his children then in the house, three remarkably fine boys, to whom, as proved in evidence, he had always been fondly attached."—*Ibid.*

"In certain parishes the poor were dying in great numbers, and die they will sooner than go into the Bastile, as they call it."—*Mr. Walter's Speech in the House of Commons, 1837.*

"The peacefully inclined, and particularly aged women, who have been accustomed to the quiet of their own cottages in their native village, and others, also, feel such an abode (a Union workhouse) to be nearly as bad as Bedlam to them. Their existence cannot be otherwise than perfectly wretched. I have heard several say they would rather be in prison if it were not for the disgrace; indeed, I know the poor, generally speaking, to be very unhappy in the House, and that ninety out of a hundred go into it with feelings very similar to those with which a bullock goes to the slaughterhouse."—*The Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath), in the "Times," August 25, 1840.*

"A poor man with a pig need not apply to a Relieving Officer! that is an effectual bar to relief! Thus a poor man is either driven to despair or desperation, from an abhorrence of the 'House.'"—*Letters of a "Suffolk Juror" on the New Poor-Law, 1838.*

"MINTO, OF FELTON.—There cannot be the slightest doubt but this poor man came to the dreadful resolution of destroying himself in consequence of the Morpeth Union's ordering him to be taken to *Bedlington workhouse*. . . . I shall give the declaration of the Coroner to the jury who sat upon the body. Mr. Russell has filled this situation for nearly twenty years, and is both an able and dispassionate gentleman. After hearing the evidence, he said, 'What an abominable shame to offer to take this poor infirm old creature from among his neighbours and acquaintances, to place him among strangers, without any prospect of benefit to the township. There can be no doubt that he committed the act from the dread of going to the poor-house.'"—*Blakey's "Controversial Letters with the Morpeth Board," 1837.*

"Wm. Woods was indicted on a charge of stealing one bushel of potatoes. "I have to say I am guilty. I had but sixpence on which to support myself, my wife, and five children, for the whole week;

if I had had "threepence" more, and had not been almost starving, I would not have broken the laws of my country." Poor fellow! does he yet call *this* his country? The Chairman, in passing sentence of solitary imprisonment for *one month*, said, "he might have been received into the Union House if he had pleased, or he might have gone to a distant country, and earned an excellent living!" He chose the chance of escaping detection, to *shun imprisonment in the Union House*, or to undergo transportation. The essence of the New Poor-Law is voluntary transportation, founded on the Test Act! This New Poor-Law Act is an Act of desolation! A man, and his wife, and six children, in this place, *rather than go into the Union House*, on several days during the snow, lived on a peck of potatoes a-day! the price was 4d. a-peck. Eight fellow-creatures, in the midst of plenty, to be compelled to exist on one halfpenny a-day! Is this England?"—*Letters of a "Suffolk Juror," 1838.*

"I have known numbers of families suffer the greatest destitution, *rather than submit to go into the workhouse*. . . .

. . . Sooner than be separated from each other, many families submit to the greatest privations. The very feelings congenial to nature, and which bind them to each other, *cannot* be broken. I have heard a mother say she would die on the scaffold rather than have her children taken from her."—*Roworth's "Observations on the New Poor-Law," 1840.*

"I consider a residence in a gaol *preferable* to living in a workhouse. Indeed the Governor of the Bath gaol told me that he had had it repeatedly (I almost think he said *universally*) said to him by those of the inmates, who had also been inmates of the workhouse, that they *far preferred* Prison residence, discipline, and food, to that in the workhouse."—*Extract of a Letter to the Author from the Rev. C. Fowell Watts, (of Bath), dated 23d of October, 1840.*

"He knew of two instances occurring in one week, of persons who *preferred death* rather than go into the workhouse."—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons, Jan. 29, 1841.*

"I have known crippled widows of advanced age and most sober habits to quit the workhouse and wander the streets for weeks together in the most inclement weather. I have asked them if the workhouse was not preferable to leading such miserable lives and half



starving. "No;" has been the reply. They felt it *preferable* to run the risk of being found some night dead in the streets to returning to that prison-house of misery and oppression."—*The Rev. C. Fowell Watts.*

"The law under which the poor man has cheerfully toiled, has been withdrawn, but no relaxation of claim has been withdrawn from him for taxes. He is called upon to make 'his tale of bricks as hithertoforth, now the straw is withheld.' A new law has been passed to deprive him of his domestic comforts, to cause him to be taken, in his declining years, from his old associates; from the children of his love; not a trifling allowance to keep on the urgent throbbings of nature, except through the tender consideration of a Relieving Officer; he may be compelled to go to the Union-house; to be placed under lock; to be shut out from the all-glorious sun; to be placed under the mercy of the Governor; and thus to have his grey hairs brought in sorrow to the grave! Is it to be wondered at, then, that the poor man should say, '*I will die rather than go to the Union-house!*'"—*The "Suffolk Juror."*

"I am satisfied that many have lingered, and hungered, and died, *rather than accept the workhouse*, so that it has actually *tested them into another world.*"—*Day's "Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law,"* 1838.

"It is commonly asserted that the severity of the refusal of out-door relief to the labourer is much mitigated by the ready offer of the workhouse; upon this subject I find it difficult to repress my feelings, and write with becoming moderation; when I reflect that *one hundred and fifty* of my fellow-creatures, are shut up, and kept upon a diet, characterised by medical authority 'as productive of debility, and pre-disposing to disease;' and since the character of *this House* has become known, I firmly believe that many of our poor are *prepared for death and starvation rather than seek an asylum within its walls.*"—*Rev. Stephen Butler's (of Soberton) "Letter to the rate-payers of the Droxford Union,"* 1838.

"A poor woman, who had been in one of these Union Bastiles, went to a public-house to fetch a letter that came from her son, and borrowed 4d. to pay for it; and some of the company were speaking in favour of the New-Poor-Law. The poor woman said, 'I only wish those who like the law may suffer under it as I have

done. I would sooner kill my children and hang myself than go in again to be treated as I have been.' She burst into tears after saying this; but before she got home, the servant girl came after her with 6d. and some halfpence, collected from the company for her. The Union Surgeon told this woman, after she had been in the Bastile the *first time*, that she was very weak and low, brought on for want of proper food and nourishment; and she herself believed it was brought on by the bad living and treatment she had experienced under the New Poor-Law, and the last I heard of her, was, that she was in the last stage of a consumption."—*Extract of a Letter from a Southern County Correspondent to the Author*, dated October 2, 1840.

"A poor woman, named Jane Grayson, in her evidence before the House of Lords' Committee (*vide* page 394), declares, that *sooner than go into the Union Bastile again*, she would get two ounces of laudanum, and equally divide it among herself and children, and they would all sleep together; and they could not punish her, after that had taken place!"

"I have visited the sick and dying out of the 'House,' in the most wretched places that can be imagined, and enduring such sufferings and privations, that I have endeavoured to persuade them, *but in vain*, to go into the workhouse. I remember one case of a poor young woman lying in a cellar, but who, nevertheless, said that kind friends, and *poor ones too*, brought her all she wanted, fruit, buns, a little jelly, &c., which I saw each time I visited her, and these things she could not get in the Union-House. I have before my eyes, too, an old woman (whom for months I visited), lying on a bedstead, the sacking of which was in so wretched a state, that her back nearly touched the floor. When I have proposed to her the Union House as a place where she would have a better bed, &c., she has replied—'No, Sir, *I will never go there*; my miseries, and want, and sufferings, are, I know, very great here, but I will bear them rather than go into that *House!*' Here, I can see daily my daughters and my grandchildren whom I love to see; and, when I am dying, they will attend upon me, close my eyes when I am dead, and follow me to the grave. In the Union-House I shall, on the contrary, be surrounded by strangers, who (caring not for me) will close my eyes."—*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. C. Fowell Watts*

(of Bath), to the Author, dated Oct. 9, 1840.

"The Coroner said he knew that the poor would sooner die than go into the workhouse."—Inquest on Elizabeth Friry, aged 65, who died from starvation, Oct. 12, 1840, at Kensington, owing to neglect of the Relieving and Medical Officers."—*Times*, Nov. 4, 1840.

"In his visits among the poor, he had found that great numbers would rather starve than enter within the walls of a workhouse."—*Speech of W. Roworth, Esq., Mayor of Nottingham, at a Meeting of Rate-payers of that Town*, July 16, 1840.

"I have seen the dying man at my door, and heard his voice cry, 'For God's sake, beg of them to take me into the House, that I may not die in the street!' when the Relieving Officer had refused him admittance there. I stood by his bedside, when one had been provided for him, and saw the tear of joy roll down his cheek, when, in answer to his request, I promised he should not be removed into the Union House to die! I have seen families in sickness, destitution, and want of food, and, when death was near, without a bed whereon to lay the body in an easy position! I have seen the famishing mother, frantic, seeking food for herself and children! I have seen the weeping widow shed tears at the cruel treatment she received from the Relieving Officer, when she was refused relief for her starving children! I have seen affectionate children weeping and mourning at the prospect of their aged parents being separated from them in a workhouse; and the dread of their separation seeming more than nature could bear! I have seen married women with wan looks, bearing children with exhausted bodies, and their husbands with meagre countenances, through want of sufficient food, *choosing to suffer the extreme of destitution rather than submit to be separated in a workhouse!*"—*Observations on the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham*, by W. Roworth, Esq., Mayor. Published Nov., 1840.

"During the dearth of employment in Nottingham, one family whom I visited, became unlike the same persons they previously were, in their appearance, through want of proper food and clothing. I persuaded them all I could, and withheld relief from them for a time, to cause them to go into the House, as I was confident disease would take place; but they

would not go into what the woman regularly called 'The Bastile,' and at last they became the most afflicted creatures, with the loss of the use of their limbs, and then, as I generally found it to be the case, some out-door relief was given."—*Ibid.*

"There are many evils produced by withholding temporary relief; from my own knowledge of the way it has been withheld in Nottingham, it has produced the greatest distress amongst the industrious poor, and brought on disease, which would have caused death, had not others provided that which the Relieving Officers ought to have given. The painful and demoralising effect of refusing temporary relief, and offering the in-door test merely to get rid of the applicant, is but little known. At such times, the poor (*from dread of the House*) sell or pawn one article of clothing or furniture after the other, to get food, until they have scarcely anything left: their beds and bedding are gone; they sleep on the floor, with scarcely any covering; and through such numbers being improperly together, immorality and disease follow."—*Ibid.*

"Erasmus Charlton, Police Sergeant says: 'The weavers are much distressed: they are wretchedly off in bedding: has seen many cases where the man and his wife, and as many as seven children have slept upon straw laid upon the floor, with only a torn quilt to cover them. Has frequently told them they would be better off in the poor-houses:' their answer has been, 'WE WOULD SOONER STARVE!' Has often dropped in at meal times, and found them eating potatoes with a bit of 'flick,' or suet."—*Report of Mr. Miles, Commissioner of Hand-loom Weavers' Inquiry, for Gloucestershire.*

"The miserable inmates of the Windsor workhouse have just been removed from their comfortable quarters in the workhouse, in Sheet-street, in that town, to the newly-erected Union workhouse at Old Windsor. Many of the old creatures shed tears upon being removed from the comforts they had hitherto enjoyed, to be exchanged for the miseries and the restraints, and the hard fare, of a 'Union.' Several manifested a disposition not to be removed; and one poor man (who doubtless had heard of the *humanity* practised at 'Unions') resolutely refused to be taken, except by force. He was immediately handcuffed and dragged away!'"—*Times*, Nov. 21, 1840.



"It was well known that thousands would rather die of starvation, and that thousands did die from that cause, *rather than submit to the degradation offered to them*; and he felt no hesitation in declaring, for the facts bore him out in that assertion, that the Poor-Law Commissioners were wholesale murderers."—*Mr. Thomas Clutton Salt's Speech in the Birmingham Town Council, upon the threatened introduction of the New Poor-Law into that town*, Dec. 1, 1840.

"Let them look at the facts stated in reference to some of the Metropolitan districts, that twelve out of every thirteen of those who were attacked by disease, produced by want, perished, *rather than apply at the Union workhouses for relief*."—*Ibid.*

"Among the many thousands who pine and die outside the walls of a workhouse, rather than submit to the Commissioners' 'regulations' within, there are but comparatively few who are registered as having been starved to death. The last return of the Registrar-General gives only 167 as the number of starvation cases in 1838 in all England, which is scarcely four times as many as were brought to an untimely death in the Bridgewater Union workhouse under the dietary regulations of the Commissioners; but then the actual causes of these deaths were not registered, or any inquests held on the victims. Thus, the reported number of starvation-cases has but little to do with the actual amount; although even 167 proved cases are somewhat more than should have occurred in a country where £50,215 per annum is abstracted from the proceeds of the labouring man's toil, and lavished on a Poor-Law Commission."—*Mr. Bowen's (of Bridgewater) Letter in the "Times," Dec. 16, 1840.*

"The dread of entering the Union workhouse is very great at Hereford, although the law in that city, from motives of political expediency, is not *dared* be put in full force. A little while ago the worthy wife of a Whig Alderman endeavoured, *with all the eloquence she was mistress of*, to persuade a young widow woman, with her five fatherless children, who, previous to her marriage, had lived as a servant with her (the 'marrow' of the Alderman), to 'discreetly go,' with her children, into the Hereford workhouse. 'It' (the Union workhouse) said the enthusiastic lady-loyal subject of the *Three Kings*, 'was as clean as any gentleman's house, and she and her young

ones would be *so nice and hot* there all the winter, and in the summer could come out well off.' But the temptations held out by the municipal female charmer had not the desired effect upon the poor woman; she declared, in my presence, that she would *sooner take her children, one by one, and chop their heads off than enter such a place!* Another old woman about 60, when spoken to concerning the separation clause, exclaimed, with tears in her aged eyes, that she was sure 'God never meant that an old woman should be taken from her man; and though they might have bits of bad speech with one another, now and then, they would *sooner starve out together than go into the Union, to be parted*.'"—*From a Hereford Correspondent*, Dec. 23, 1840.

"On Monday se'nnight a poor old man, named John Hall, aged 59 years, and belonging to the parish of Gnosall, was found dead in a shed belonging to Mr. Michael Belcher, on his land at Coton, in that parish. The poor old man had been in the Gnosall workhouse, but he left that establishment, preferring a *precarious mode of life to the shelter and sustenance it afforded*, and nothing could induce him to re-enter its doors. It seems that for some time his wretched existence had been prolonged by what had been scantily doled out for him by the hand of charity, and when found he was partly undressed, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather. An inquest was held on the body at the Boat Inn, on Tuesday, when the following verdict was returned:—That the deceased died through the inclemency of the weather, and the want of the common necessities of life."—"Wolverhampton Chronicle," quoted in the "*Times*" Dec. 24, 1840.

"A short time ago, a labouring man of the name of David Williams, of Cinnamon-grove, near this town (Haverford-west), was at the last Pembrokeshire Quarter-Sessions found guilty of embezzling a sum of money belonging to his employer, and sentenced to imprisonment and hard labour, which sentence is not yet expired. The prisoner has a wife and three small children unprovided for. The poor unfortunate wife being deprived of her husband, who was the sole prop and support of herself and infant children, applied to the humane and benevolent society, called the 'Guardians of the Poor,' for relief. The distressed applicant stated, that *sooner than go to the Union*, she would

be content with the small sum of three shillings weekly for the support of herself and family; but this was refused her, and she was informed, that if she did not choose to enter the Union and receive relief there, she might go where she liked. The poor woman, after declaring that *no inducement* whatever should make her enter its walls, then departed and went home; she disposed of every article belonging to her that was saleable for the purpose of subsistence, and after the little money which she had procured by these means had been exhausted, and all prospect of assistance was banished from her view, she locked herself and children up in the cottage, and came to the resolution of putting an end to the existence of herself and children by starvation. Fortunately, however, a neighbour entered the cottage in time to prevent the awful determination being carried into effect, and found them in a most deplorable state; temporary relief was then afforded them, and the surgeon for the district requested to go and see the distracted creatures, which he did, and immediately ordered wine should be given them, and also that a nurse should attend them. The poor woman and her children are now in a weak state of health, and only the paltry pittance of five shillings a-week is allowed them to subsist on, and 2s. 6d. for a nurse to attend them. Had it not been for the providential interference above alluded to, this poor woman and family would have perished in consequence of the Board's refusal to grant the poor woman the trifling sum of 3s. per week, while the Guardians are now compelled to give 7s. 6d."—*Haverford-west Correspondent to the "Times,"* Jan. 8, 1841.

"The workhouse is terrible in the eyes of the poor; it is terrible to the harmless and respectable, as well as to those whose characters are vicious and violent. Samuel Daniels and his wife suffered no peculiar ill-treatment in the workhouse of Stratford-upon-Avon, yet the general discipline was so intolerable to them (though of blameless disposition) that after three days' experiment, broken in health as the husband was, and hopeless as both were of finding the means of subsistence in London, they returned to the metropolis on foot; and, in less than three months afterwards, Daniels died from disease, aggravated by want of the necessaries of life. Edwin Garrett, at Wells, murdered his children, because he loved them too well to endure the separation which must

have been the consequence of their entering a workhouse, and he could not provide them with food at home."—*Times*, Jan. 30, 1841.

"Henry Campbell, a distressed looking youth, was charged before Mr. Dyer with stealing a pair of shoes, which he had effected by seizing them in broad daylight before the owner's face. The prisoner, on being asked what he had to say in his defence, replied that all that had been stated was perfectly true, and that he had been impelled by want to commit the theft. Mr. Dyer asked why, if he was in such distress, he did not apply for relief to his parish. The prisoner said, that the inmates of the workhouse were so harshly treated, and so ill-fed, that a prison was much preferable. The prisoner was then fully committed for trial."—*Times*, Jan. 10, 1841.

"On the third day after the setting-in of the snow in Dec., 1836, no fewer than 149 applications for relief were made to the Board of Guardians for the Union of Cuckfield, in Sussex: to a few of these, as cases of urgent necessity, a trifling relief was given in flour; but the workhouse was offered to 118, of whom 6 only accepted it."—*Annual Register*, 1837.

"The confinement of the new system was intolerable; and they who were unable to bear it were thrown out upon the wide world. Hence arose the encouragement to emigration, and all the artifices resorted to to induce the poor to emigrate. The whole number of persons thus driven from their country, under the management of the Commissioners, amounted last year to 5,140."—*Mr. Walter, House of Commons*, Feb., 1837.

"The idea of the workhouse is so hateful to the people, that unless great care be taken they will adopt some violent course. But supposing the people to submit to the condition on which they are to be fed, is it not probable, that, deprived of every family comfort, and of all that tends to mitigate the asperities of the human character, they will come out of your great prison-houses infinitely more disposed to enter into predial warfare, than at any former period."—*Mr. D. O'Connell, Irish Poor-Law Bill*, Feb. 9, 1838.

"HATTON GARDEN.—Eliza Goswell, a distressed looking young woman, far advanced in pregnancy, was placed at the bar, yesterday, charged by Mansell, a constable of G division, with being destitute. The constable being sworn, stated



that, at an early hour yesterday morning, he was in Leather-lane, Holborn, when the prisoner came up to him and requested him to take her to the station-house, as she was in a state of destitution, and had no place to go to. Witness asked her whether she had applied to the parish; she said that she had; she belonged to Marylebone parish, but she would rather at any time be in the House of Correction, than in a workhouse. Witness did not immediately take her into custody, and she pursued him for some time on his beat and abused him, and she threatened to complain of him if he did not take her, when he took her to the station-house. The prisoner now said that she was destitute, and she belonged to St. Marylebone parish, in which workhouse she had been.” —*Times*, Feb. 16, 1841.

“He alluded to an afflicting case which he had seen in a morning paper, where a woman had *died from famine*, and was, when found, in so emaciated a state, as to be scarcely recognizable. Her whole furniture consisted of two old chairs, without backs, and the walls of her dwelling were running down with moisture. This woman had been advised to go to the workhouse, but, instead of following this good advice, she held up a sort of dagger, and vowed that rather than go there she would plunge it into her breast.” —*Marquis of Normanby, House of Lords, Debate on the Drainage and Improvement of Buildings Bill*, Feb. 12, 1841.

“Only last week, in this very town, where the law has been in a great measure administered by the Guardians without the interference of the Commissioners, and therefore with less severity, a poor woman committed suicide, preferring an agonizing death to being separated from her husband and family in the workhouse, to which want of employment had compelled them to apply.” —*Sheffield Iris*, Feb. 9, 1841.

“An inquest was held on Saturday last at Witton, before Mr. Hollins, on the body of an unfortunate creature who was found under a hedge whither he had repaired as the only shelter he could obtain rather than endure the imprisonment consequent upon his becoming an inmate of one of the Poor-Law Bastiles. He had formerly been in easy circumstances when living at Hanley, but had so dissipated his property there that he was compelled to seek a situation, which he held for some time in Liverpool, as clerk; losing that he came to Witton; and ra-

ther than be driven into the workhouse at Hanley, he met his death as above. Verdict—‘Died by the visitation of God.’”—*Stockport Advertiser*, Dec. 25, 1837.

“DEATH THROUGH ACTUAL STARVATION AND DREAD OF THE BASTILE.—On Friday, an inquest was held before Mr. Wakley, at the Three Kings’ Tavern, Clerkenwell-close, on view of the body of Elizabeth East, aged 33, whose death was occasioned through actual starvation. Martha Daniels, a miserable looking object deposed that she lived in Cock-yard, Turnmill-street, Clerkenwell; deceased lived in the same house, and had been cohabiting with a man named Holmes. Deceased used to sell lucifers, and Holmes went about bone-picking, which was also witness’s occupation.....On Tuesday morning witness asked deceased, who was then lying on a mattress, how she was, to which she only replied, ‘Oh, dear.’ Witness saw her no more alive, and about three hours afterwards was told that she was dead, which she found to be the fact.....Edward Holmes stated that he obtained a living as well as he could. He had known the deceased for the last four months, during which time she had now and then lodged with him. About three weeks ago he had told her she must shift for herself, and she went away. He saw no more of her till Friday last, when she came back to him. He advised her, as he had often done before, to apply to the workhouse; but she said, ‘Oh! no, no! I’ll not go to the workhouse while I can scrape a few halfpence by selling Congreves.’ Deceased had nothing to eat that day, nor at any time previously to her death, she having no money, and he not having anything to give her. The man who rented the room, the last witness, himself and deceased (when she was there) all lived together. Mr. Wakley—‘Is it possible? Then how is it that all you people, being in the same room, could see this poor woman starving?’ Witness—‘Why, Sir, we are obliged to go about our own business, and forage for ourselves. I did not consider that she had any legal claim upon me.’ Mr. Wakley remarked that it was a very melancholy case. As far as they could learn, the deceased had but a basin of tea from the Friday till she died. The deceased had been starved to death without any person’s being legally accountable. He considered the conduct of the witnesses to be exceedingly disgraceful, and could not dis-

cover the meaning of such a frightful state of society. Workhouses, since the passing of the New Poor-Law Act, had become as much dreaded as the Inquisition was in Spain. The jury, having expressed their full concurrence in what had fallen from the Coroner, returned the following verdict—"That the deceased died from exhaustion, consequent on starvation arising from her not having made application to the parish for relief, and from her refusal to go to the workhouse."—*Weekly Dispatch*, Feb. 28, 1841.

"On Thursday, C. C. Lewis, Esq., the Coroner for Essex, held an inquest at the Swan, Romford, on the body of Thomas Brown, aged 58, late hostler at the above inn, who committed suicide by cutting his throat with a pruning knife a few days before. It appeared from the evidence, that the deceased rented the stables belonging to the Swan, by which speculation it is supposed he realized a good profit. For some time past he had been in a desponding state, and expressed his fears to many that he should be compelled some day to go into the workhouse. On the night he was last seen alive, he appeared particularly depressed, and alluded several times to the workhouse. He left the Swan about nine o'clock, and was seen no more of till noon the following day, when he was found in the stable with his throat cut, and weltering in his blood. After his death upwards of £70 in gold and Bank notes were found in the hayloft, and it was further ascertained that he had £800 invested in the funds. ....The Coroner said the deceased must have laboured under a most extraordinary delusion, and there could be no doubt that his intellects were deranged. The jury returned a verdict of 'Temporary derangement.'"—*Ibid*.

"GUILDHALL.—On Saturday, Ann Weeks and Sarah Hart, two young women, were charged with wilfully breaking the windows of the London Union workhouse. The Poor-Law officer said the prisoners were admitted into the 'casual ward' of the workhouse, and, disliking the fare, they broke the windows for the purpose of being sent to gaol. The females said, that they had gone into the house in a famishing condition, and, after sleeping in the house all night, they received a small piece of dry bread, and on the following morning had nothing to eat. *They sighed for the living of the prison, and broke the windows in hopes of being committed to gaol!* The overseer said,

that there were 50 applicants a-night, and he admitted that the fare was hard enough, being only a specified allowance of dry bread; but the paupers had broken every window, pulled out the stoves, and done all the mischief they could. The Alderman said, it was lamentable to think *that a gaol should be sought after by the poor as a superior refuge to the workhouse.* He must administer the law as he found it, and he therefore committed the young women for two months to Bridewell."—*Times*, March 12, 1841.

On Wednesday, the 3rd inst., an inquest was held before Mr. Wakley, upon the body of William Eaton, aged 61, a pauper, who died in the workhouse at Kensington within a few hours after he was brought there on the Saturday preceding. This man was a journeyman shoemaker, who, during the winter, had been almost entirely without employment. When in full work he was accustomed to earn about 6s. a-week; but never more. His character was good; his disposition quiet, inoffensive, and uncomplaining. Lodging with a poor Irish labourer in Brompton, he was so reluctant to become burdensome to his landlord's family, that he went on pining day after day, without the necessities of life, yet never so much as mentioned the fact of his being in want of food. On Saturday, the 27th ult., he was found dying in his room, the door of which he had locked for the purpose of concealing his distresses from observation; and, on his pockets being searched, they proved to contain *on order for his admission into the Kensington workhouse, dated four days previously.* When the jury went to view the body, they found it in appearance scarcely different from a skeleton; and several of them are reported to have declared that the sight which they then saw could never be effaced from their remembrance. After hearing evidence at considerable length, they returned the verdict,—"*That the deceased died from exhaustion, gradually produced by scantiness of nourishment.*" The poor man may well be left to tell his own story. On the Wednesday before his death he informed Mr. Burr, the master shoemaker for whom he occasionally worked, that he 'had applied to the Union, and he had a pound of meat and a loaf of bread.' He also said, they wanted him to go into the workhouse, but he said, he did not like to sell his liberty, and be placed in confinement; but if they would but allow him 2s. a-week out, he



should be able to do: He did not say that he had an order for the workhouse. He said, he '*would not go into the Union workhouse, as he could not sell his liberty!*' He also stated, that 'When he first applied to the Union he was kept waiting to be called in from before 11 o'clock in the forenoon until between 8 and 9 o'clock at night, and the next day he had to go all the way to Kensington for his pound of meat, which lost him half-a-day.'—*Times*, March 12, 1841.

"A gentleman had that morning desired him to inform the meeting, that 'During the late severe weather many

persons, able-bodied labourers, in Tilehurst parish, and their families, lived for days on boiled Swedish turnips, rather than apply to the Bradfield Union for relief.' If you know what kind of stuff these turnips are when boiled, you may guess to what a state the poor creatures were reduced. Still, however, the supporters of the measure had the effrontery to assert that the poor were better off, as wages had been raised—an assertion wholly against facts and truth."—*Mr. Walter, Crown and Anchor Meeting*, March 11, 1841.

## BASTILE TREATMENT AND TYRANNY.

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"And wherefore do the poor complain  
A rich man ask'd of me ?

\* \* \* \* \*

I turn'd me to the rich man then,  
For silently stood he :  
You ask me why the poor complain  
And these have answer'd thee."—SOUTHEY.

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"I have been told, that poor women have been brought to bed there (in the Bastile), without any attendance, and without being allowed even a candle."—*Leicestershire Correspondent to the "Champion,"* Feb. 16, 1840.

"Under the provisions of the bill no fewer than half-a-million of children would be shut up in solitary confinement, without an opportunity of seeing either father, mother, sister, or brother, and deprived of all communication with those who were near and dear to them, cooped up, like birds in a cage, to be ultimately thrown loose on the world."—*Lord Teynham at the Crown and Anchor*, Feb. 9, 1838.

"Earl Stanhope said that, in the event of a Committee being appointed to inquire into the working of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, he could prove more cases of the cruel, and unconstitutional, and unchristian working of the 'Act' than the House would go through in a session. One of these was of a man who killed himself in consequence of the treatment he suffered in the workhouse. A coroner's jury brought in a verdict of temporary insanity, but it ought to have been *wilful murder* against the oppressors of the poor, who drove the man insane. Another case was that of a young woman, who was flogged like a soldier."—*House of Lords*, May 1, 1839.

"A parent or relative, or an old master, was not, under the present system, allowed to give to the paupers in the workhouse any additional allowance, as regarded bedding or provision, or any other comforts, which might take from the difficulty of their situation. These parties are not allowed to give any little presents to paupers in workhouses, and to this effect he might mention one fact relative to a poor girl in a Union in Kent, who was desirous to give her aged mother in the workhouse a seed-cake, but was pre-

vented."—*Lord Wynford, House of Lords*, May 1, 1839.

"Mr. Mitchell gave an account of a woman recently deceased in Portwood, who had died by starvation. She had applied for relief, and was told to go into the streets, and prostitute herself."—*Stockport Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, Feb. 1, 1839.

"Mr. Chappell related an anecdote of a man who was now in Knutsford gaol, for fetching his child into his own bed, having heard it crying during the night, in another part of the workhouse in which he then was."—*Ibid.*

"There was a standing order in the books of the Guardians, that none of the medical gentlemen was to see patients in the workhouse without the master or matron being present. The sole object of this was, that the inmates should have no opportunity of making any complaints of their harsh treatment to their medical attendants."—*A Speaker at an Anti-Poor-Law Meeting at Morpeth, reported in the "Northern Star,"* March 9, 1839.

"William Hunter, an elderly person, became affected with a bowel complaint. The doctor ordered port-wine and sago; the port was considered too dear, and gooseberry wine was given. The consequence was, that the poor man was carried off quickly."—*Ibid at ibid.*

"We regret to learn that the annual dinner of roast-beef and plum-pudding, &c., usually allowed on Christmas-day to the paupers in the Bridgewater Union, has been, by order of the Poor-Law Commissioners, for the first time in the memory of the oldest inhabitant, discontinued."—*Dorset County Chronicle*, Dec. 24, 1836.

"Earl Stanhope, in the House of Lords, 15th of June, 1839, related, that certain Guardians had told a poor woman, when she applied for relief, 'to go home and make a pie of some of her children.'"



"Mr. T. Duncombe presented a petition from three of the Overseers of St. Andrew, Holborn, stating that they had lately visited the Holborn Union workhouse, where they had found forty females, of ages varying from forty to eighty, confined in a small room, seven feet nine inches in height, several feet below the surface of the earth, and built over a large sewer, the smell from which was very offensive. The room was, besides, exceedingly dark, and these aged females were confined eleven hours out of the twenty-four, at very severe work, pulling wool for mattresses. They were not allowed any beer, and the expense of their maintenance was but fourpence per day each."—*House of Commons*, July, 1839.

"John P——, Governor of the P—— Union, was in the habit of standing outside the workhouse, and inviting, as a treat, his companions and the passers-by, to come in and see his wild-beasts fed, as he called them; viz., the wretched inmates."—*From a Correspondent*.

"There was a woman not long ago in one of the Union workhouses, who, for three days after her husband died, knew not but that he was living, and in good health."—*The Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens*, at Wigan, Nov. 1838.

"Until that infernal law came into operation, if an Englishman had gotten a woman with child, he was sorry for it; and, though circumstances might be such that he could not marry the woman, he always kept the child, and had a pride in keeping it. This was always done; it was done by the poor as well as the rich; but now those damned devils had made a law that if a poor girl be led astray and have a baby, there was no father for it in the world; there was nothing to maintain it: and she must either take herself into the Bastile, and be kept a prisoner all her life, and have the baby taken from her, either to be poisoned or strangled, or cut up alive, or dead, by the damned doctors, or sent abroad to the plantations—she must do all that, or bind her baby to her broken heart, and plunge with it into the stream and die."—*Rev. J. R. Stephens*.

"The New Poor-Law regarded the poor as being positively worth more when dead than living, inasmuch as the Overseers could procure from the surgeons £2 12s. per corpse, and thus save the expense of burial."—*Feargus O'Connor*, *Bradford Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, Dec. 13, 1837.

"Isabella Shotton, Woodhorn, aged 80,

granted on the 25th of December, 1836, One Shilling per week, to keep house, coal, clothes, and food."—*Blakey's "Letters with the Morpeth Board."*

"Hannah Sykes has been in the Almondbury workhouse four or five months; she is often afflicted with fits. While there, and in a fit, she fell and broke her leg. She asked the master of the House 'to send for a doctor to set it;' he told her, 'that she had no use for it, for she worked none.' The leg remained in that condition for a fortnight or three weeks. Two women went there who knew her; they informed her mother, who went to the town's committee at Slaithwaite, and informed them of this worse than barbarous treatment. They gave her a note to go to the doctor, and he went with her, and set the leg. The mother found fault with the master for neglecting her daughter in the manner described, and he told her, 'that if he had got the leg set, without an order, he would have had to pay the doctor's charge out of his own pocket.'"—*Mr. Oastler's Letter in the "Champion,"* March 29, 1840.

"The roast-beef given to the poor inmates of St. Marylebone workhouse, on the day of her Majesty's marriage, was dearly paid for by the unfortunate paupers, who were deprived on the following day of their usual allowance of meat, and on the day after that found the basin of soup subtracted from their ordinary modicum of food. The loyal, benevolent, and economical Guardians so contrived the matter, that in the end there should be a positive balance of profit to the parochial fund."—*Champion*, Feb. 23, 1840.

"A few days ago, while strolling in Stepney, I happened to meet a funeral, which was followed by about half-a-dozen women, dressed in the modern workhouse garb; but what was my surprise to see the procession turn down an obscure street, instead of advancing towards the parish church. I had the curiosity to follow it, and found that the corpse was taken to a cemetery, as it is called—an unconsecrated ground, the property of an individual, which the next proprietor, if he think it a more advantageous speculation, may convert into a kitchen-garden, or a brick-field, or a building ground. Well, the corpse was laid in the grave, no clergyman read the beautiful service of our church; in short, the whole proceeding was a direct outrage on the sacred institutions of our country."—*Correspondent to a London Paper*, Feb. 23, 1840.

"The strict workhouse 'test' requires that every man before receiving relief should enter the workhouse, and his goods be sold for the benefit of the parish."—*Commissioners' "Third Report."*

"We must say, that we felt unutterable disgust at the following cold and cruel observation of the Poor-Law Commissioners:—'It must be remembered, too, that we do not propose to deprive either the woman or her parents of their direct means of redress: she may still bring her *action for breach of promise of marriage*, and her parents may still bring theirs for the loss of their daughter's service.' What cruel derision! The poor girl, whose bread is obtained by the daily labour of her fingers, whose fortune may reach 20s., *she* may bring her *action for breach of promise of marriage*! The father, whose weekly pittance of ten shillings is expended in supporting his wife and family, *he* may bring his *action for the loss of his daughter's service*!! This language but adds insult to injury!"—*Hereford Times (Whig)*, June 28, 1834.

"Jesse Knolton, a pauper, belonging to Minstead, died in Ringwood, and on Tuesday last, Mary Jones, a woman who had lived in his family, was begging through the streets for money to pay for his grave, saying, the allowance from the parish was a *coffin*, and *2s. to bury him*, and no more! It seems as if this rigid economy follows its victim after death, nor ceases till the last shovel of earth closes up his grave!"—*Hants Advertiser*, Jan. 21, 1837.

"The Commissioners have written to the Guardians of the Boston Union, refusing to grant out-door relief to a man named Clarke, who cannot earn sufficient, by sixteen hours' labour, to support himself, wife, and eight children."—*Lincoln Chronicle*, Feb. 16, 1839.

"A poor man, in the township of Ovenden, had a daughter who died suddenly, and, being extremely reduced in circumstances, he thought to obtain some little relief from the parish to assist him to bury her decently. Accordingly he applied to the Relieving Officer of the township of Thornton, about five miles distant, but he could not see the *should-be-reliever*. The next day he went again from Ovenden to Thornton, and thence to Bradford, and from Bradford home again, a distance of at least twenty-five miles, and, after all this going and coming, how much did this miserable slave get from these flinty-

hearted devils? *Just nothing*. He applied to the Bastile agent at Ovenden, and told him he could not bury her, and all the compassion he received was this sympathetic expression, 'If he could do no ways else, he might put her in the wall for a picture!'"—*Northern Star*, Dec. 29, 1838.

"The Retford Board of Guardians passed a resolution on Monday, that all relief hitherto allowed to illegitimate children, born before the passing of the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act, should be for the future refused; and that no aid should be afforded to such children out of the workhouse; and that no relief should be given to illegitimate children born since the passing of the above Act, unless both mother and child shall go into the workhouse."—*Doncaster Gazette*, April 7, 1838.

"On Saturday last, a complaint was brought before the Magistrates at Horn-castle, by the visiting Guardian of the Thimbleby Union workhouse, against the Master and Mistress, for grossly illtreating a young female pauper. It was given in evidence, that there was in the House a girl of about sixteen, who was almost an idiot, and who was dirty in her habits. The mistress, in order to punish her, had her taken to a distance from the House to an outhouse where pigs are kept, and, after alarming the girl most dreadfully by putting her amongst the pigs, she had her stripped naked, in which condition she locked her up in the outhouse during the whole night, with nothing but an old sack to cover her."—*Lincolnshire Chronicle*, April 7, 1838.

"POVERTY AND CRIME.—Any one may, if he please, send a round of beef to Newgate, where it will be readily received, and promptly devoured; but if the person were to send a shilling's worth of bread and cheese to a Union workhouse it would be refused admittance, and his benevolence stigmatized as improper."—*Weekly Dispatch*, March 18, 1838.

"By Mr. Walter.—Q. 'Supposing any charitable lady in the neighbourhood were desirous of giving the children a dinner on Christmas-day, could you, as the chairman of the board, allow a thing of that sort to be done?' A. 'No, I could not.'"—*John Napier, Esq., a Magistrate, and Chairman of the Petworth Board of Guardians, before the Poor-Law Committee*, March, 1837.

"On Monday week, the master of the Union workhouse, belonging to the New-



ton Abbott Union, situated at Chudleigh, was summoned before the magistrates for the following assault on a young woman, an inmate of the House. 'The pauper had given some offence to the master, who had her seized, and a straitwaistcoat put upon her, in which she was confined for a considerable time.'—*Western Luminary*, March 31, 1838.

"For upwards of 30 years the unfortunate persons in the House of Industry, or Workhouse, at Worcester, have been permitted to receive trifling presents from their friends, consisting of tea, sugar, and a little butter occasionally. This practice seems to have given great offence to the Poor-Law Commissioners, who have instructed Sir F. Head, the Assistant-Commissioner of the district, to put an end to it. Sir Francis went to the poor-house lately, and, after inveighing against the enormity of permitting paupers to receive such indulgences, he threatened to inflict a fine of £5. upon the governor if ever he offended again."—*Worcestershire Chronicle*, Nov. 24, 1838.

The Poor-Law Commissioners have ordered, that no medical officer of a Union shall be obliged to attend the poor in case of illness without an order from a duly authorized union, or parish officer; and that he is not to attend at all after 10 o'clock at night."—*Nottingham Journal*, Jan. 7, 1837.

"I heard also complaints, that when they were separated from their children, it had been known that some of the children had been taken ill and died, without their parents being informed of it."—*Extract of a Letter from Mr. John Perceval to Mr. Oastler*, dated Feb. 18, 1838.

"Harriet Decoster Rushworth, twenty years old, with her daughter, an infant nine months old, were placed in the workhouse of St. George's-in-the-East. Her baby was taken from her! and two other babies were put for her to suckle. This was done the very day she went in."—*Oastler's Letter to Lord John Russell*, March 3, 1838.

"A little boy having been separated from his mother in Nottingham Union, raged in all the agony of despair, and actually tore off his own hair by handfuls."—*Ibid.*

"It was stated at Icklesham, that a little child had been heard crying in the Union workhouse, in violent grief. 'Let me out—let me out—I want to see my daddy—I must go to my daddy.'"—*Letter*

from Mr. John Perceval to Mr. Oastler, dated from Hastings, May, 11, 1838.

"One of the aged paupers said, 'that he was afraid to say all he knew, but he doubted if all that died, got fair burial.'"—*Ibid.*

"An aged married couple, at Hastings, (each above 70 years old), were in need. Application was made for relief to the parish to which they belonged, to know if they would give a trifle to help to maintain them. The parish refused—and the aged pair were sent to the Bastile. They were immediately separated. The poor old woman could not eat what was put before her in the workhouse! The old man found that the workhouse fare did not agree with him, and he complained 'that he missed his comfortable cup of tea in the evening with his old wife!' The consequence was they could not bear it—they went out."—*Ibid.*

"One of the favourite measures of the New Poor-Law Commissioners in most of the country districts is, to secure in every Union two or three magistrates as Guardians of the poor. The gate-keeper is also generally made constable, so that a court for the apprehension, trial, and punishment, of the refractory inmates of the Poor-Law Bastiles is thus fully and practically effected. Should any disposition manifest itself among the paupers to question any of the humane rules or liberal regulations of the Commissioners, they are at once placed in the hands of the constable, dragged before the Board of Guardians, and all the horrors of the treadmill presented to their affrighted imaginations; excuses, explanations, entreaties, are all in vain, neither age nor sex can hope to escape from this secret tribunal. The unfortunate pauper is denied the privilege allowed to the meanest malefactor, even to a murderer—no friend, no advocate, may plead for him; he is condemned in secret, unseen, and unheard; at once transferred from the workhouse to the County Gaol, from breaking stones to the treadmill, and thence back to his former prison, and to his solitary labour. His punishment is frequently unknown, even to his nearest relations. They dare not utter a complaint, not even a whisper must be heard; the most abject submission, the most rigid obedience, is exacted from these unfortunate wretches—they are shut out from the common sympathies of mankind, and degraded below the condition of the African slave. If such cruelty, oppression, and wrong, did not really come under our own imme-

diate observation, it might be thought incredible; but such scenes are of frequent occurrence!"—*Surrey and Middlesex Standard*, Feb., 1839.

"At a recent meeting of the Keighley Guardians, a poor young woman was brought before them, charged with idleness. A discussion arose as to the quantity of work that should be performed by a pauper, when one of the magistrates gave judgment to the following effect:—'You are to earn 3s. a-week by weaving, nurse your own child, to wait upon your mother (who is also in the workhouse), and to wash for them as well as yourself; and if you do not do this, you shall be committed to hard labour and the silent system.' The poor girl, who is little more than a child herself, said, 'Gentlemen, I will save you the trouble of condemning me to this slavery;' and, leaving the room, ran to the river, into which she was throwing herself, when two of the Poor-Law officers caught her, and brought her back to the board."—*Weekly Dispatch*, Dec. 18, 1838.

"Phoebe Smith, was brought up before the magistrates, charged by the Guardians of the Cheltenham Union with the following offence (?)—She had been left a widow, with two young children; having no means of supporting them, she applied for parochial relief, which was refused, unless she and her children went into the workhouse. Driven by starvation she went into the house. Having lately had an offer of a place as nurse, she accepted it, leaving the workhouse where her children were, offering the greater part of her scanty wages towards their support, which the Guardians refused to take, and obtained a warrant against her. The Magistrates decided that the woman was guilty of the crime laid to her charge, and gave her the option of taking away the children, and all starving together—giving up her situation, and going again into the workhouse—or of being committed to the House of Correction for a month to hard labour."—*Cheltenham Chronicle*, Dec. 2, 1838.

"Mr. Hawley, the Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, has made the following order:—'That the master of Westham workhouse shall, under no circumstance, permit the smallest present to be received by any pauper inmate of the house from any member of their families or their friends.'—So strictly has this cruel rule been carried into effect, that paupers have been deprived of even an ounce of snuff

or a little tobacco."—*Chester Courant*, Jan. 6, 1838.

"A man, once possessed of considerable property and scholastic attainments, applied for relief to his district 'Union.' The reply of the official was, 'What! a man of your ability want relief! there is a loaf for you, and let me never see your face again.' Next day he was found dying in the streets, and expired in a station-house. In his pocket was found a paper, inscribed, '*I lay my death on the Union.*'"—*Northern Star*, 1838.

"A person of competent ability is liable to maintain his father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, child or children, when any of them become chargeable to the parish, and unable to work."

"In the Brighton workhouse, it appears that the women's side has been lately so crowded, that *four* and even *five* have been sleeping in the *same* bed."—*Champion*, August 12, 1838.

"A weaver, named Coleman, who was imprisoned for several days, and then brought before the Nottingham magistrates, by order of the Basford Board of Guardians, on a charge of sleeping out of the workhouse, from which he had leave to go in search of work, and on which the magistrates dismissed him, was again brought before the bench on Wednesday, by order of the Guardians, that the magistrates might reconsider their decision, and commit him to gaol, and hard labour for the offence. It appeared, that on Coleman's going before the Board, the Guardians were very angry that he was not punished, and desired that he might again be taken before the magistrates; they refused the poor fellow to see his wife, and when the magistrates indignantly refused to entertain the charge as cruel and unjust, the Union refused to allow the woman to wear the shoes and stockings she had on, and took away all the clothes from the newborn infant, scarcely one month old—(although they had sold the man's furniture from his cottage, on his going into the workhouse)—and the poor woman, naked-legged and barefooted, and the infant completely naked, were sent from the place."—*Nottingham Journal*, March, 1838.

"The Gloucester Board of Guardians wrote to the Poor-Law Commissioners, informing them that they had ordered the master of the workhouse to supply a good dinner of roast beef and pudding to the poor in the house on Christmas-day. The Commissioners, in answer to this



communication, *forbade* the resolution of the Board.”—*Manchester and Salford Advertiser*, Jan. 5, 1839.

“The Thirsk Board of Guardians, upon the late coronation, were requested to grant the paupers in the workhouse leave to partake of beef, plum-pudding, and ale, which had been provided *gratuitously* for the poorer classes. This was refused. The Board next proceeded to order that the paupers on that day, should not be permitted to have any extra rations, even if sent to them. Lady Johnstone sent a message to the Board, intimating that she would gladly provide tea and cakes for all the paupers in the workhouse at her own expense. This was also denied! On the coronation day, application was made to the workhouse master, to know if any beef and plum-pudding which might be sent to the paupers, would be allowed them. The answer was, that his orders were not to allow it. On urgent entreaty, the master permitted (*what! is the liberty of the subject, guiltless of crime, permissive only?*) the paupers to go out on that day; and they were all regaled with beef, &c., except three, who were not able to walk, and for whom a good dinner was sent to the workhouse, but sent back. On the Monday after, the Board met, and resolved that, as punishment for the paupers accepting the beef and pudding, they should be closely confined within the workhouse for a month, which tyranny is now performing. A day or two subsequently, the poor wretches were looking through the locked and barred gate, when the Board, as a further punishment, took away the gate and *walled up the place!*”—*Weekly Dispatch*.

“Look at the shell in which the naked bodies of Englishmen and Englishwomen, and the orphan and helpless children of English men and women, were carried, sometimes in a wheelbarrow, and sometimes in a filthy cart, to their long and silent home!”—*Mr. Oastler at Halifax*, August 28, 1838.

“By Mr. Walter.—Q. ‘What is the consequence to the poor, in reference especially to the medical aid, from parishes being so inconveniently appropriated?’ A. ‘The consequence to the poor is this, that, in some instances, before a poor man can get a dose of medicine, *forty miles* of ground must be traversed!’”—*The Rev. Thomas Sockett’s examination before the Poor-Law Committee*, March, 1837.

“Q. ‘What would be the effect upon the poor, if you were to bury the paupers

in places set apart for that very purpose?’—A. ‘I know what would be the effect upon the poor; it would be an extremely painful thing to many of them, and the observation that would be made would be one that was made the other day, that they suppose they would be put in the *workhouse dunghill*, because no consecration of the bishop would change the workhouse dunghill into a burial-ground. Another thing is, that it is an extreme outrage to the feelings of a husband to say, *There you shall go and die, and where you die you shall be buried, and you shall not be put by the side of your wife!!!*’”—*Rev. Thos. Sockett before the Poor-Law Committee*, March, 1837.

“Is it right that poverty should be declared a crime, and that riches should be enthroned as virtues? I ask you not, if you are prepared to feed and fatten on unwholesome food, at fifteen-pence-half-penny per head a-week? Or, if you should be visited by sickness, after nine o’clock at night, that you should be refused all medical aid, because you are poor? I ask you not, whether, because you may be poor, you are prepared to be visited with a punishment tenfold heavier than if you were vicious and thieves? that you should have your wives and children separated from you? be shut up in a cursed Bastile? be banished from the sight of everything but walls, and keepers, and chains, and bars, and grates, and dungeons; and be denied those little, kindly helps, which even the friends of the poor, are, sometimes, enabled to *enrich* themselves by granting? I ask not, if a man has a right thus to separate those whom God has joined together? or, whether, when a poor widow is unable to maintain her children, that they should be torn from her and be Bastilled? and if, by interest, she can, now and then, get leave to see her own dear babes, the pledges of her husband’s faithful love, and that her maternal feeling, even overcoming her penury and want, should induce her to take each of her three fatherless infants, an apple; to make them love the name of mother, and to see them, smiling, eat the dainty bit? I ask not, is it right, Englishmen, that a monster called a keeper, paid, clothed, housed, and provisioned by yourselves, should be permitted, in a Christian country, to revel in the cowardice of hell, by snatching, in the widow’s presence, her little present from her orphan babes?”—*Mr. Oastler at Huddersfield*, Jan. 14, 1837.

"In the Pewsey Union, vermin appear to have been preying upon the living carcasses of the inmates of various ages!"—*Times*, July, 1840.

"He had known a boy who had been put into a dark and dismal cell for the crime of looking through the bars at his mother."—*A Speaker at the Kidderminster Operative Conservative Meeting*, Dec. 9, 1838.

"One circumstance struck him very forcibly last Sunday, when he was coming from church. In the churchyard they were lowering in the grave a corpse which had been brought from the workhouse. The coffin was merely four pieces of deal nailed together, without any mark to denote the name, age, or family of the deceased."—*Ibid.*

"We have a case before us of an aged and childless woman, who, with her husband, a respectable tradesman, had paid household rates for many years—perhaps to the extent of £50 or a £100 in the whole—and who, though a widow, and unable to work for her bread from infirmity, was refused the wretched pittance of eighteenpence per week, because she would not go into the workhouse, though it was obvious that into a workhouse she could not go, without a *certainty* of almost immediate death, from asthma and spasms, which rendered it absolutely necessary to the poor creature's existence to reside in the high part of London."—*Standard*, Nov., 1836.

"He severely blamed the Commissioners, and adduced an apparently hard case in illustration, namely, that of a poor man with a wife and seven small children, whose earnings were only about eight shillings a-week, and who, in order to lessen the demand upon this small pittance, wished to have part of his children placed temporarily in the workhouse, but was informed by the Commissioners that, unless his wife and the whole of the children went into the poor-house, no partial relief would be admitted."—*Lord Wharnccliffe, House of Lords*, March, 1838.

"Since the introduction of the Poor-Law, how many a poor creature has died from want, although Coroners' juries returned a verdict of 'Died by the visitation of God.'"—*Mr. Boxer at the Southwark Meeting*, May 1, 1839.

"That the bill sanctioned murder, he would refer them to the case of the man Morris, aged 32. He applied to Peckham for relief; this was refused, although the poor fellow was starving: at length he

got admitted, and before any food was given to him, he was "tested," and set to work to grind corn, and, while at work on the mill, he died!"—*Ibid.*

"Did not the New Poor-Law encourage white slavery? were not children sent out from workhouses, by what were denominated 'Friendly Societies,' and sold for £7 15s. a-head, and that to a parcel of Dutchmen, who had no feeling for the friendless and unprotected children."—*Ibid.*

"Mr. Perceval, in a letter to Mr. Oastler, dated Kensington, May 11, 1838, says:—'I received a letter yesterday from a gentleman in Suffolk; I copy from his letter—They go on *robbing* and *murdering* the *poor* by this infernal New Poor-Law to such an extent, that it is really *horrible*! One of my maid-servants' father (67) left his wife, who *had been bedridden five years*, with one girl (13), and another *sickly one* (15), who could not be moved, in *perfect health himself*, to enter the workhouse. His heart was so full, that *the tears rolled down his cheeks in torrents*. He could not say, Good-bye! and that day fortnight *HE WAS DEAD!* and *nobody knows how!* *HE WAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST-SPIRITED AND BEST LABOURERS THAT EVER LIVED!* The porter was sent about two miles to his cottage, on last Wednesday morning, (May 2nd), between nine and ten o'clock, to say, if any of the family wished to see their father, they must make haste and come directly, or *they would not see him alive*. The two youngest girls ran and gathered *eight* of his *ten* children, and got to the Bastile by 11 o'clock, in an hour-and-a-half. But *their father had been dead many hours!!!* The Governor *would not*, and the others appeared as if they *durst not*, tell them *when or at what hour he died!!!* But they have since been told by a boy who slept in the same sick ward, that he heard him rattle in his throat, about two o'clock in the morning. He never *asked* for anything, *but employment*, except at last, when he found he could not obtain it. He then begged hard for some little allowance for his bedridden wife, and two poor, helpless, and now fatherless children! But this was refused—and *he was jeered at*, and *scoffed at*, when he asked for it! which *broke his heart!*"

"The other night, a good woman, named Mrs. Jane Brown, who lives in Stockport, near the workhouse, had occasion to be sitting up for some of her family till about twelve o'clock. On opening the door the light which was



thrown opposite showed her something which she thought looked like a human being. She went up to it, and then went and told a neighbouring woman who was sitting up with her, that she thought there was somebody under the wall. She took the light, and saw cuddled up, like a hedgehog, under the wall, a little boy, apparently about twelve years of age, fast asleep, though it was a cold, bitter, frosty night. She shook him, and, having awakened him, asked him what he was doing there. He asked if the workhouse was not somewhere there, for he had heard that he might sleep in the workhouse, but he had fallen asleep there beside the wall. Mrs. Brown said to him, that by his looks he had been in a workhouse already. He had on a kind of uniform that the woman took to be a workhouse dress. He said he had been at Huntingdon workhouse, and formerly in the Stowmarket workhouse, and had made his escape from the latter place because they had behaved so cruelly to him. He said there were seven of them, father, mother, and children, and they were beaten and flogged for any little fault in the most barbarous and inhuman manner. He said he had a sister, about fourteen or fifteen years of age, and he had not seen her for a length of time. One day he heard her voice; she was crying, and he climbed the wall, or partition, that divided them, and saw her fastened in a kind of stocks, which they fasten their heads in. They were cutting her hair off, and they were flogging her

because she cried to have her hair cut off. He told his brother to run away, and fetch their aunt, and try if she could not get her sister out. His brother got out, and never came back again, and he himself resolved to make his escape if he could, and he did escape. But he also told the woman at Stockport that their meat was the nastiest that could be conceived, and that in the skilly he detected *lumps of resin*, which had been boiled in it. The woman asked him what it was for, and he said *the skilly ran through them, like water through a pipe, and they put the resin into it to make it stick in their bellies*. He (Mr. Stephens), had since inquired about resin, and he found that it was very common with pigmerchants to give their pigs, when about to sell them, a feed of meat with resin in it, which stops the body up, and gives them a plump appearance, by which the purchaser is deceived. So it seemed, in order to keep the devil's dirt in the stomachs of the poor wretches, resin was to be mixed with it for the purpose of obstructing the various functions of the body, that they might not die of cholera morbus, but of some disease for which they had not yet found a name."—*The Rev. J. R. Stephens's Sermon, preached Feb. 17, 1839.*

"*Sarah Higgins*, Morpeth, a widow, aged 64, afflicted with asthma, can make no endeavour—One Shilling per week for house-rent, coals, clothes, and food!!"—*Blakey's "Controversial Letters with the Morpeth Board."*

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FAMINE.—"I heard a groan and a peevish squall,  
And through the clink of a cottage wall—  
Can you guess what I saw there?"

FIRE AND SLAUGHTER.—"Whisper it, sister! in our ear."

FAMINE.—"A babe beat its dying mother,  
I had starved the one and was starving the other."

COLERIDGE'S "FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER."

"I've seen that fiend-law's introduction,

In spite of Fielden, Stanhope, Oastler, and the good:—

Its mildest aim, murder and seduction,

To overflush our streets with agony and blood!

It tears the breast from the babe at suction!

And all to gorge a Hyena Commission-hood—

Hail! thou legislative offspring begot

'Tween a demon—manikin—and a Scot.'"—DON JUAN, JUNIOR (Second Edition).

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"If you state any instances of New Poor-Law maltreatment or oppression—if names, dates, and places, are mentioned—the parties are persecuted directly or indirectly (*the former if they dare*) beyond anything I can describe; and if any one thing is mentioned about

any one connected with the 'Houses,' or the 'Law,' in favour of any poor person, the cap is sure to fit some of the crew—the Commissioners, Guardians, or their underling or expectant officers, who are, everyone, upon the look out: or if it comes from any of the paupers, they raise

heaven and earth against the party to find some flaw (supposed, or reported), in their characters; and if they cannot find something, there is sure to be a person or party incited to irritate and aggravate them to do something wrong if it is possible. Thus they *make them bad characters*, and say they are not to be believed on oath, &c. The Irishman said in his defence for stealing a horse,—‘Now, my Lord, there is only one man swears that he saw me steal the horse, and I can bring a hundred witnesses forward that *did not see me steal the horse.*’ But, contrary to poor Pat, these hundred witnesses are all believed, and the one poor person is not credited at all. .... I will just give you a sample of the dread the poor have of *speaking out*. A poor old woman, 70 or 75, had about 2s. 6d. per week, and a poor daughter lived with her, who dressed and undressed her, and had 1s. 6d. a-week, making 4s. between them. The Guardians decided the young woman could earn her living, and took off the 1s. 6d.—or she might come into the house. This, of course, was death to the old woman; so they both tried to live on the 2s. 6d.; they had 1s. 6d. rent to pay, and then only 6d. each for the seven days. The poor old woman soon sank under it; and the neighbours all whispered (as well they might) that she was starved to death. After this *murder*, as I call it, they (the Guardians) gave the daughter a liberal weekly allowance—what I call ‘hush-money’—which had the effect of making her silent; for she told one of the neighbours she durst not come to give me an account of the treatment of her starved mother, for fear the Guardians should take off her pay. In fact, she had heard some strong hints that caused her to believe that such a result would follow her talking about the matter. .... Another illustration is of a poor half-witted fellow, a very stout, strong man, 38, whose father had been the largest farmer in his native parish. He could drive cattle and sheep, &c., was ever willing to do all he was able, to gain a livelihood. This poor fellow had a very bad impediment in his speech, and the Governor, on his entering the Bastile, said he was drunk, and put him into the *black-hole*; which so frightened him that he dared not complain much, or report the ill-usage. When, however, the *cursed* skilly ran through him, day after day, like water, and the Surgeon took but lit-

tle, if any, notice of him, though he was very ill—he could bear it no longer; and, in about fourteen or sixteen days from the time he entered, came out so weak that he dropped, or lay, by the side of the road, about two miles from the work-house; where he would have perished, had not some one come by, who knew him, with a horse and cart, and carried him the other three miles home. The consequence of such treatment was, he went into a rapid decline—wasted away to a skeleton, and died in a few weeks. *Another Poor-Law murder!* His sister, knowing I knew all the facts of his case, begged I would not say a word about it; it would not bring her brother to life again, she said; and since she had got a pretty good out-allowance, and if she were to make any complaint, she should be forced into the House, and that would be the death of her—as I believe it would—and then there would be *double murder!*—*From a Correspondent of the Author's, describing the Working of the New Poor-Law in a Southern County, 1840.*

“There are 735 individuals in this Morpeth Union, as out-door paupers; 619 out of this number are designated in the books as *aged, infirm, and disabled*, and there are 64 orphan children and others, below 16 years of age; making 683 persons quite helpless out of the 735. The gross sum which this number of persons costs, including rent and every item, is £338 6s. 10d. Out of this, deduct six lunatics at 8s., and this sum will give, on a division, about 1s. 9¼d. to every individual. Let us take rent alone, and we shall find that about 9¼d. will be about the average cost; then the poor creatures have *one shilling left*. Out of this, coals, clothes, candle, soap, and other household necessities, are to come; and these will cost *fivepence*; so that there will just remain *sevenpence per week, or one penny per day TO BUY FOOD WITH*. Now, is not this a most horrid affair? One penny a-day for food to the *aged, infirm, disabled, and children!!* Can even the wretches of the Board openly declare that this is *feeding* the poor; no, it is killing them by inches. Why, the felons in the gaol get *fourpence* a-day for food alone, and are found shelter, fire, clothes, and soap to wash them with; and here are the *honest poor* allowed by a Board of Guardians *one penny a-day only for food!*—*Blakey's “Letters with the Morpeth Board,” 1837.*

“There are now 3,000 persons in



Northumberland who have not more than *one penny* a-day to obtain food with; and who, but for the casual hand of private benevolence, would die from sheer want.”

—*Ibid.*

“Some of the Unions were twenty miles in length, and sixteen broad; their enormous size did strike him as if it had been intended to preclude the poor altogether from applying to the Board.”—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

“I have known two men to be sent to prison for three weeks for merely warming their hands for two or three minutes, according to an existing and permitted practice, when engaged, during severe frost and snow in February, in very cold work.”—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts, in the “Times,” August 11, 1840.*

“In one of these Union-Houses there were four poor unfortunate young women in the same way at one time, while my informant, a young married female, was there; it was about the period ‘*Marcus’s*’ book was talked of so much. These young women had a midwife who was sent for from a distance of six or seven miles, and who came generally in a great hurry, and gave three of these young women a *brown powder*, as my informant states—after which the child of each was soon born, and *soon dead!!!* Thus three out of the four were, as I have before said, treated. The fourth said to my informant, ‘I hope you will stop in the house till I am put to bed, and assist me in my trouble, for nothing shall induce me to take one of those powders.’ She resolutely refused, and both she and her child did well. Does not this fact speak volumes!!!” — *Original Correspondence, 1840.*

“An inquiry has recently taken place at Crediton, in Devonshire, relative to the death of two paupers of the Crediton Union, who are alleged to have been treated with brutal cruelty. It appears that in the month of January last, two paupers, named Lock and Dart, died in the Crediton workhouse. The report current at the time was that, shortly before their death, these poor creatures had been removed to a dark out-house, and laid on straw, without any covering but a single blanket, the thermometer being at the time many degrees below the freezing point; that the proper medical treatment was not afforded; and that the officer who accompanied a relative of Lock into this miserable place, *used an expression of*

*impatience on discovering that Dart was still alive!!* It was further stated, that after their removal into the place referred to, these sick paupers were made to walk *naked*, in very severe weather, through the court-yard of the workhouse to the common pump, where the mop used in the House was applied to their persons, and they were washed in the same manner that a carriage or a staircase might be washed—in cold water, from head to foot.” — *Manchester Advertiser, Sept. 5, 1840.*

“*Jane Aspin.*—The justification put forth by the Board for starving her to death is, that she was not so good as she ought to have been. According to their notions of public duty, they have a right to starve a human being to death if her morals should not square with their *own purity.*”—*Blakey’s “Letters with the Morpeth Board,” 1837.*

“MORPETH, April 7, 1837.—I, Mable Aspin, do sincerely and solemnly declare before these witnesses, that I did, in the early part of January last, attend the Morpeth Board of Guardians, for the purpose of applying for some relief for my mother, Elizabeth Aspin, who was lying ill in bed; *that my mother was so reduced for want of food, as to oblige her children to go to the fields around the town, and pick up the husks of turnips the cattle had left, and boil them for food;* that the Guardians refused all relief, and *made use of language to me, which clearly intimated that I and my sister ought to follow improper practices to obtain my mother a livelihood;* and, in consequence of hearing this recommendation, I nearly fainted on the Town-hall stairs.

“Witnesses, (Signed) her  
“*Thomas White, Mable X Aspin.*  
“*Philip Ozley. mark.*”  
—*Ibid.*

“At a Board lately, a poor fellow, with a wife only, but who, having undergone the starvation ‘*test*,’ had at length worked himself up to the unnatural resolution to be separated from his wife in the Union-House, appeared at the Board, at the distance of eight or nine miles from his home. The order was about to be made out, when one of these immaculates, who had a small parcel of land in the poor man’s parish, he himself living in another parish in the same Union, said, ‘You have not applied to *me* for work.’ That was a ‘*clinch*er;’ the order was withheld, of course, and this poor fellow was dismissed, without *food*, and without money, to trudge his eight or nine miles

back to an empty cupboard, but with the cheering prospect of work in the morning. 'Tis said, that 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick;' but this is a love affair, whilst this poor man's was a craving belly affair. However, in the morning, off he went to his benefactor; this volunteer supporter of his hopes of food. 'Oh! I have no work for you to do!' There, then, that's new! that is worthy of all praise! The Commissioners must reward that Guardian; he shall have a draft from Somerset-house."—*The "Suffolk Juror."*

"An inquest was held on Friday, on the body of Gwenllian Thomas, aged 74. It appeared in evidence, that the deceased and her husband were admitted into the Brecon Poor-House the day preceding, being at that time in great distress; that, agreeable to the *regulations of the New Poor-Law Act*, the deceased was separated from her husband, and placed in one of the female wards, where she became much distressed, frequently calling for her husband, and that between the hours of 11 and 12 at night, she rose from her bed and jumped out of one of the windows, about sixteen feet from the ground. The jury, after a patient investigation, returned the following verdict—'That the deceased, Gwenllian Thomas, came to her death by a fall from one of the windows of the Brecon New Poor-House, having thrown herself out of the window when in a state of temporary derangement, occasioned by her having been separated from her husband, under the provisions of the New Poor-Law Act. This jury cannot separate without thus publicly expressing their abhorrence of that clause of the 'Act,' sanctioning the separation of man and wife.'"—*Silurian*, Nov. 2, 1839.

"Princes and Prelates of Christian England advertise for *coffins* to be made by contract of *three-quarter-inch* deal boards, besmeared with pitch or thinnest paint, without even the commonest ornament, and tumble the bodies of the murdered poor into them—such I mean as have not been cut up by the boy-butchers of the hospitals—and, without pall or toll of bell, wheelbarrow them to a poor-law grave!"—*Rev. J. R. Stephens's Third London Sermon*.

"How different had been the treatment of the labouring poor in Nottingham, and in Holbeach, Lincolnshire. In Nottingham there was a large and vigorous population; and when the law was

about to be introduced last year, the Whig gentry, thinking it rather a delicate experiment at a period of great pressure, generously entered into a subscription for the purpose of easing the poor-rate. The sum of £5,000 was raised, in order to sustain and employ the poor, that there might be no inconvenient clamour with reference to the introduction of this bill. In August last, the money being expended, they said the principle of the bill must be enforced; and was it enforced? No such thing. The able-bodied labourer was provided with work, and paid out of the rate, as in olden times under the 43d of Elizabeth. In Holbeach, Lincolnshire, the Guardians had made application to the Commissioners; they had sent up an humble memorial to Somerset-house, praying that in the extreme pressing severity of the season, so many being out of employment, the Board might be allowed to exercise their discretion, and give the able-bodied labourer and his family some relief. What was the answer of the Commissioners? 'You shan't do it. No; it was not done with regard to the agricultural labourers, who were prevented by the severe inclemency of the season, by the rigours of the climate itself, and by no fault of their own, from working. This was the answer:—'Break up your establishments, sell your furniture, abandon your cottages!' . . . He wished to know why, if the principles of this bill were so worthy of adoption, it had been deemed so flexible that in Nottingham assistance should be given out of the poor-rates to the labourers in the shape of wages, while at Holbeach it was entirely withheld? No doubt the Commissioners were present, as they always were, when their misdeeds were discussed in that house, and he hoped some Hon. gentleman would take care to ascertain from them, why one rule had been applied to Nottingham, and the reverse to Holbeach?"—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons*, Feb. 20, 1838.

"The regulations of the Commissioners were most arbitrary and partial, for why should the paupers in the London workhouses be allowed eleven pints of beer a-week, while those of the Bethnal-green workhouse, for instance, were restricted to cold water."—*Mr. Pearce, at the Freemasons' Tavern Anti-New Poor-Law Meeting*, Feb. 19, 1838.

"In the Union of Droxford there was a woman of the name of Honor Sawyer, who, being ill, the Master refused to send



for the doctor to attend her until it was too late, and the consequence was, that she died from neglect.”—*Rev. Edmund Dewdney (of Portsea), at the Freemasons’ Tavern Anti-New Poor-Law Meeting, Feb. 19, 1838.*

“Under the present law, he knew that in Suffolk many cases had taken place, in which a delay of ten days had occurred between the application for, and the administration of, relief.”—*Earl Stanhope, House of Lords, March 22, 1838.*

“An investigation of considerable importance was made last week at Cambridge, touching the death of an infant, which, with its mother, had been removed from Tuplow to Cambridge by a brute of an overseer. The child died in consequence of the removal, and to carry his hardheartedness still further, the overseer refused to give a single farthing towards the funeral! Upon being remonstrated with for not giving relief, and in ordering the unfortunate mother and babe to be removed, he said, ‘*he believed the child would die soon, and so the matter would be dropped.*’ The coroner summed up the case in a most able manner, and quoted several cases to show that if a party be guilty of negligence, and death is the result, the party guilty of such negligence is also guilty of manslaughter. The jury immediately returned a verdict of *manslaughter*, and the overseer was committed to gaol forthwith.”—*Halifax Guardian, Jan. 26, 1839.*

“An investigation was held on Thursday, at St. Mary’s Cray, Kent, on the body of a pauper named Burgess, who died in the workhouse of the Bromley Union. It appeared that the deceased having applied for relief to Mr. Palmer, Relieving Officer of the Lewisham Union, that gentleman (?) had him sent forward in an open cart to Coodham, his alleged legal settlement. Burgess was exceedingly ill at the time, and died shortly after his arrival at Coodham. Mr. Palmer, in his defence, said he did not know that the man was in a dangerous state at the time of his removal. After a long investigation the coroner summed up, and, in doing so, observed, that the jury were to determine if any party was to be made responsible for the death of the deceased. The jury retired for about an hour-and-a-half:—*Mr. Snelling* (the foreman) ‘We find Mr. Palmer guilty of neglect of duty, not knowing the state the deceased was in at the time.’ *Coroner*—‘But what is your verdict in reference to the deceased?’

*Foreman*—‘We find there has been neglect of duty; we can’t soften it.’ *Coroner*—‘Do you intend a verdict of manslaughter, or not?’ *Foreman*—‘We leave that to you, Sir.’ The jury-room was now again cleared, and after above two hours had elapsed the public were admitted, and the jury delivered a verdict of ‘*Manslaughter against George Harding Palmer, accompanied with a recommendation to mercy*’ (?). The coroner then made out Palmer’s commitment to Maidstone gaol.”—*Examiner, March 31, 1839.*

“An inquest was lately held on the body of Mary Hancox, at Ampney Crucis. The deceased was a poor woman, aged 55, the wife of James Hancox, a poor old cripple. Being destitute, the deceased applied to the Cirencester Union Board on the Monday (distant from Ampney about three miles). The day was piercingly cold, and after waiting at the Board a long time without getting relief, she returned home in a very weak and shivering state, and went to bed ill. On the Tuesday, application was made for medical assistance, and medicine was sent on the Wednesday. On Friday she was attended again, and had more medicine; and on Saturday morning she died. After a long and patient investigation, the jury returned a verdict—‘That the deceased died by the visitation of God, and that her death was accelerated by the intensity of the cold to which she was exposed in attending the Board of Guardians on the preceding Monday.’”—*Gloucestershire Chronicle, March 31, 1838.*

“Perhaps the worst and most decidedly *un-English* part of the new system is, the separation of mothers from their children, husbands from their wives, in the New Bastiles, and the driving *men* from the marriage bed to sleep with *boys*.”—*Weekly Dispatch, Feb. 21, 1836.*

“In this day’s paper, we give some particulars of scenes at Rolvenden, in Kent, connected with the removal of aged and bedridden paupers in the depth of winter. It will be seen that some of the victims died under the operation, and that others were subjected to sufferings that made them pray to the Almighty to release them by death.”—*Ibid.*

“Jacob Pike, a poor man, weak in intellect, who had, for many years previously to the introduction of the New Poor-Law, been an inmate of the Soberton Poor-house (he was then a stout, robust man, he is now dwindled away and exhi-

bits a pale-faced, half-starved appearance; for the last twenty years this poor innocent creature had been supplied with tobacco by private charity, but even this is now denied him by the rules and regulations of the House."—*Rev. Stephen Butler's (of Soberton), "Letter to the Rate-payers of the Droxford Union," 1838.*

"I found in one room (of the Droxford House) 14 children confined with the itch; one little girl had been shut up in this apartment eight weeks and was not then recovered; another was in such a state of salivation as to be laid on a bed, spitting up blood, which I was informed she had done for a week."—*Ibid.*

"A man with a large family went into the ——— Union workhouse. As soon as they were washed and got the workhouse dress on, the Governor said to another woman, 'take that child from that woman's (the man's wife) arms and carry it to the nursery.' The poor mother thought she should drop. The woman took it with tears in her eyes and said she would take care of it. The mother could only say, 'Pray do.' This was on a Friday, and on the following Sunday, one of the women stole away the child from the nursery and brought it to the mother in the chapel, and she suckled it during the service, and two or three days after she did the same again..... This woman was locked up with others in a close gaol of a washhouse, containing the linens of the dead, diseased, those having the venereal complaint, &c., &c., and, day after day, though in a very weak state, could only have the door open a little time by chance, as that was contrary to the 'Rule.' The matron of the workhouse said to this poor woman, 'I know you and the rest all want and desire some extra or better living. I dare not give it you!!' This family cost too much in the Bastile, and were sent for out again; a farmer promising the man work because his family cost 30s. or 40s. per week in the House: but he had not worked for him many weeks before he was jeering him with how well they lived in the workhouse, &c., &c. The poor man said, 'Yes, indeed! look how they have treated my son.' (This son had married a widow with a family, and, to oblige the Union officers, went to Lancashire and got a good contract there. But his master died, and his son refused to abide by the contract, which the magistrates could not enforce, but sent the whole family back by orders, which this poor family could not

help. But on their return, they were treated worse than beasts. Indeed it is enough to break any one's heart to read their story—I have written it from their own mouths.) The master of the poor man in question, still continued his jeers and sneers, till the poor man said—'Damn the House! I wish it was blown up,' &c., &c. The master discharged him that night, and said he would every man that made use of such language, and gave him notice to keep off his premises. The poor man replied, that he had committed no crime, or done anything to be so cruelly treated; and if he did not come to ask him for work, he might be sent to prison, or refused all relief, because he had not done all he could to obtain work, and keep his family from becoming chargeable. After this, the best work he could get, was picking stones off the land to mend the roads. Himself and four children, 16, 14, 12, and 8 years of age, were five weeks earning 40s., which, reckoning the children at 2d. per day, (including Sundays) each, left him not 6d. per day for himself. In fact such work is only fit for women and children, who can pick up more than men very often."—*Extracted from a Letter of a Southern County Correspondent to the Author, dated Oct. 2, 1840.*

"A poor man, with a wife and child at the breast, was last winter obliged to go into the Union workhouse. The woman's child, which was only a year-and-a-half old, was taken from her, *as usual*, and they were treated so badly that they came out again at the end of one week, when she suckled the child again. But the man could get only four days' work, and after that was again forced into the 'House,' with his wife and child. The poor woman, on this their second admittance, begged and prayed her child might not be taken from her, as she had suckled it again since she had been out; but all in vain. The jolly babe was crammed into a ward where the scarlet fever was raging, and the mother had great difficulty to be allowed to nurse her own child; but it recovered from that; and as soon as given up again to the matron, the father, by stealth, found it in bed with a child that had got the measles; and, before he could get the mother to it, the child had lain 48 hours in the most filthy, horrid state; from which, in spite of all the mother could do, it died from neglect of their keeping the mother from it; and she has since declared, that she would live upon half-a-bellyful of potatoes per



day sooner than go again into the work-house."—*Ibid.*

"In pages 447 and 448 of *George Avery's Evidence before the Committee of the House of Lords*, there is an account of a man named Clover, nearly 80, being worked to death by the skilly. This Clover I knew very well, and he was just such a man as Morland's picture of the 'Woodman;' six feet high, and very stout in proportion, and had been one of the finest, strongest, and best labourers that ever lived, until he was at last (in my opinion) murdered by this New Poor-Law; as another man, whom I knew, was, by being forced into the Union House, where he died broken-hearted. The same George Avery (*Evidence*, page 444,) proves his two children came home, after being in ten days,—filthy, lousy, and itchy—in fact the girl was nearly purged to death, besides bringing home lice, and giving the whole family the itch!"—*Ibid.*

"Here is what the Duke of Sussex, and the rest in the House of Lords, called 'Boons and Benefits,' granted to the poor by this New Poor-Law:—A poor girl (19) went into the 'House' to lay in, and came out, at the end of three weeks, as her mother said, with all her linen and clothes in such a filthy state, that she locked her cottage door while she washed the girl and her child, and their clothes, which were too foul to describe, and smelt so bad she could hardly bear the house shut up, but was ashamed to open the door for fear any one should come in and see them. Soon after this, the father and mother of this poor girl, herself, and her child, with seven more children, making eleven persons, went to America; and, like five or six other families around me, declared to me most solemnly, they were driven to volunteer to go, through the dread and hatred of the Bastiles, and the fear of starvation under this accursed law; every one of them protesting they were utterly at heart against leaving their native country, if they could have got bread to eat in it as they used to do under the Old Poor-Law."—*Ibid.*

"There are thousands, to my certain knowledge, who have not had one penny to buy clothes, &c., since the New Poor-Law began."—*Ibid.*

"A poor woman, named Rebecca Collett, supposed to be six or seven months gone in the family way, was committed for some trifling offence to the cell, called by the paupers the 'black hole,' for 24 hours, in the latter end of the month of

November, 1839, when it was so extremely damp that the sides ran down with water. She was put in at twelve o'clock in the day without either bonnet, cloak, or shawl on, and was otherwise miserably clad. When night came on, and it began to grow excessively cold from severe frost, the man who locked her in went to the master of the workhouse to remind him of her situation, *i.e.*, being far gone in the family way—and to ask him if she were not to come out for the night, and go in again in the morning; to which he replied, 'No; she should not.' The woman declared to me, that in one part of the night she fainted, and, at another time, her groans were so heart-rending that two men quitted their beds, got through the window of their sleeping-room, and went to her in the middle of the night, asking her what was the matter. 'Oh!' she replied, 'do go and entreat to have me let out, for I am ready to perish with the cold, and am sure I shall die before morning.' The men *dared not* go. Her groans could not allow them to sleep the whole of the night. I asked them very particularly if her cries were like those of anger and resentment, when they instantly replied, 'No, not at all; but like the moanings and groans of a dying person.' In the morning a slice of dry bread and a cup of cold water were taken to her for the third time by the porter, whom she told that she made sure she should have died in the night; and, at twelve o'clock, she was let out, when, after having sat an hour close to the fire, she was taken so ill with violent shiverings, which lasted five hours, in spite of her being wrapped up in bed in a heated flannel petticoat, and two extra blankets from other beds, that the woman with her thought she would have died. These shiverings were followed by an excessive hæmorrhage and she was ill for a week. When I complained of such treatment, I did so under the impression that the Guardians could not have given it their approval, and that it could not possibly be sanctioned by the Poor-Law Commissioners, but in this opinion I soon found myself to be greatly mistaken; for, when I first met the Assistant-Commissioner he treated it with such levity as to say, 'You seem, Sir, to think a great deal of this confinement case.' To which I replied, 'Indeed I do, for I am horrified at it.' And again, 'Why, what would be the use of straw in the cell? There is no warmth in straw, is there?' To which I gave for

answer, deeply grieved at such a spirit of inhumanity and hardheartedness, 'You had better, Sir, ask your horse if he feels no warmth or comfort in it, or if he would as readily lie on the stones?' 'Oh, Sir, I am shocked at such want of feeling!' And I am obliged with pain to observe, that when this case was under investigation, the recital of the poor woman's sufferings only produced every kind of contempt. My asking one of the witnesses if the poor woman had either bonnet, cloak, or shawl on, called forth sneers and ridicule from some of the Guardians, (who, to justify the master, told the Assistant-Commissioner that the punishment had been approved of by them). And again, when it was stated in evidence, that for five hours after the poor creature's quitting the cell, she had such violent shiverings upon her, although wrapped up in heated flannel and several blankets, that her teeth chattered in her head, a Guardian at my side observed, contemptuously, 'Her teeth chattered in her head, eh? and my teeth, too, have often chattered in my head when in bed on a cold night.' Upon which I said, 'Gentlemen, I feel we are all the children of one common Father, but I perceive there are some here who think of and feel towards the poor and unfortunate, as if they were the dogs in the streets.'—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath), in the "Times," August 11, 1840.*

"*Thomas Oliver, aged 100, and Margaret, his wife, aged 73; no friends to keep them. The Board generously gave, on the 25th of Dec., 1836, the sum of three shillings for the two. Out of this come rent, coals, clothes, &c.; the residue, if any, for food!*"—*Blakey's "Letters with the Morpeth Board."*

"I was very much struck with an instance yesterday: I will give you it. A man came to me yesterday to know what he was to do. He said there were seven of them in family, and only one, besides himself, able to work; and now it had pleased God to take away one of them by death—a little boy. He said, 'Mr. Stephens, I have been some time in this neighbourhood, and, as God is my witness, I have never bought a glass of ale since I came into the neighbourhood.' He said, 'I want it, and I think I ought to have it; but when I look at the penny or twopence, and then look at my children, I think they have more need of the bread than I have of the beer, and I dare not buy them any, and never do buy any.' But he said, 'After I have drawn the

fortnight's wages, it is sometimes as much as ever we can do to make it reach over the week we drew it in; and till the next week we are obliged to take our clothes, the wife's clothes, and the children's clothes, one after the other, to the pawnshop, to get a little money, to help us to get the week over. And now, you see my rags; these are all the clothes I have left, and that child I cannot bury. I don't like to go to the overseers, because I know they are a hardhearted set of men. They will begin to tell me about the idleness and drunkenness of the working classes; and that they ought to lay up something against a rainy day. Some of my friends have been recommending me to have a subscription, and go round in the factory; but I don't like to do that, because those who might give anything are almost as much in need of it as myself.' He said, 'I'll tell you what I have been thinking of doing, and I have come to ask you whether you think it would be right or not,—I have been thinking of getting a little bit of wood, or a piece of tarpauling, and making a something—either a box or a bag, and putting my dear boy's body into it, and carrying it upon my shoulders, in my rags as I am, through the streets, and leaving it at the church door, and kneeling down in the church, and praying God Almighty to take him and all of us in his own good time, where the 'wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' I asked him what had put that into his head. 'Mr. Stephens,' said he, 'it is time us working men did something. It is time we began to set an example, and to let the world see that we are not ashamed of what we are compelled to do, and that we are determined to do nothing but what is right. If, when my poor boy is dead, we are to have nothing from the town, and if we can get nothing fairly and honestly in any other way, I am not going into debt. If I go into debt, I must mortgage my family for perhaps six, nine, or twelve months; and I think it is high time the labouring classes began to set an example, and refuse to have their children christened, except by shedding over them an unfortunate father's tears, and praying God to bless the babe; to refuse to have their children buried, except in the way I have mentioned; and if I thought it was not against the law, I would have a flagstone taken up, and I would bury it underneath my own floor, and, over the tomb of my dear boy, pray God night and



morning to deliver us.' I told the man I could not advise him; I said I never liked to advise people in such a case; but if the case were mine, I thought I would do so."—*Rev. J. R. Stephens's Sermon, preached at Hyde, Feb. 17, 1839.*

"There was another part of this law, which he deemed to be not a whit less culpable before God; it was that by which the unhappy inmates of the workhouses were prevented from enjoying religious fellowship and community with their Christian friends in the worship of their God: they were confined to the association of persons like themselves. To them Sunday was no day of rest or enjoyment; but it was converted into a day only calculated to remind them of that unhappy fate to which the law of their own land had consigned them."—*Bishop of Exeter, July, 1839.*

"Shall an industrious artisan who offers a fractured arm as the evidence of his willing labour, be hurried, regardless of his agonizing sufferings, of the entreaties of his wife, the tears of his children—shall this valuable citizen of a free country be torn from his homely comforts, to be tossed upon the straw and iron bed of a parish Bastile, surrounded by all that is odious to the eye of independence, and shocking to the feeling of innocence? Humanity appeals from the cell to Heaven, and says—such things shall not be.—The helpless infant, the hoary head, the subject of passing accidents must be differently treated. Relief to them must not be termed a degradation—it is their right, and they must have it. Heaven and Humanity have ratified the claim—law and justice must concede it. Death must not be approached through a dungeon—at least not by the industrious poor."—*Daniel Whittle Harvey's Speech at the Southwark Anti-Poor-Law Meeting, August 23, 1836.*

"What a thing it is for an aged couple, who have lived twenty, thirty, or perhaps forty years together, till the time of weakness and infirmity had come—and why are they to be separated just at last? Where are the feelings of humanity in that? We all know what age is—'once a man—twice a child.' Towards the close of life the faculties become impaired, and I have mostly observed amongst aged couples that the Lord appoints one stronger than the other, so that they may tend and nurse the weaker; but the law acts contrary to nature, for it parts the aged from each other."—*Speech of W.*

*Roworth, Esq., Mayor of Nottingham, at a meeting of the Rate-payers of that place, July 16, 1840.*

"I found in Sussex, children were separated from their mothers, 5, 7, 10, or more miles asunder; and anecdotes were told me of their dying without information being given to their parents. I found, also, a general complaint, which appears almost inconceivable, that in some places, *they will neither relieve the labourer, nor admit him into the house.* This I have heard in other parts too. I have no doubt it is the case, though probably the Poor-Law Commissioners would 'prove' it is not so."—*Extract of a letter from Mr. John Perceval to the Author, dated Aug. 13, 1840.*

"In the report of Mr. Charles Mott, Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, addressed to the Poor-Law Commissioners, it is stated that the Vestry of St. Nicholas, Deptford, complain of a man of the name of *Doggett*, who was refused admission to see his wife in the last moments of her life at the Deptford workhouse."—*Mr. Mott's Report is dated December, 1837.*

"In these Bastiles, if a man is dying, his wife cannot see him if she be an inmate!"—*Mr. Walter's Speech, House of Commons, 1837.*

"Your petitioner humbly requested the attention of your Lordships' Committee to the case of a young woman of unsound mind, who was flogged in the Thimbleby workhouse, near Horncastle, in Lincolnshire, and respecting whom the Guardians at first reported, that 'it had done her good;' but by the persevering exertions of the Rev. J. Fendall, Rector of Bucknell, it was presented to the magistrates, and the assaulters were fined."—*The Rev. G. S. Bull's Petition to the House of Lords, May 30, 1838.*

"In various Union workhouses, whose 'rules' are prescribed or allowed by the Commissioners, it is the practice to 'crop short' the hair of paupers generally, after the manner of felons, whether children or adults, of both sexes; an act which Mr. Justice Bailey has held to be, without consent of the party, in itself unlawful, and in the case of *Forde versus Skinner*, (March 1830), he adjudged the same to be an assault; and forasmuch as it was done to a young woman with a view to her degradation, and expressly 'to take down her pride,' he directed increased damages, and the jury in consequence awarded her the sum of £60."—*Ibid.*

"Under the workhouse system, so long

as a stick of furniture can be found in the poor man's cottage, or a shilling in his possession, he is not entitled even to the luxuries of the Union Gaol. Nay, distress warrants have been issued and execution levied, 'to recover, by public sale of his goods, the defalcation of contribution assessed upon the son of a pauper earning 12s. a-week, and on the point of being married, for the parish outlay upon his mother.'—*Blackwood's Magazine*, April, 1837.

"Relief, or its cost price, when given to any person beyond the age of 21, or to his wife, or any part of his family, under the age of 16, may, under the regulations of the Commissioners, be considered by way of loan; whether any receipt for it or its cost price, or any agreement to repay it, shall have been given or not."—*New Poor-Law Act*, page 62. (Abridged.)

"When relief has been given to any person, his wife or family, by way of loan; or where it, or the cost price of it, shall be treated as a loan under the orders of the Commissioners, and any part of it remains due, *Justices may summon the master or employer*, and direct him to pay the sum at once, or by instalments, out of wages due or becoming due from time to time."—*Ibid.*

"This Act *repeals* so much of any Act of Parliament as enables any single woman to charge any person with having gotten her with child; or so much of any Act of Parliament as renders any person so charged liable to be apprehended or committed or required to give security; or, as enables the mother of any bastard child to charge or affiliate it on any person, as the reputed or putative father; or, as enables any overseer or guardian to charge or make complaint against any person as such reputed or putative father, and to require him to be charged with the expenses attending the birth or maintenance of such child, or to be imprisoned or otherwise punished for not contributing thereto; or, as in any way renders such reputed or putative father liable to punishment or contribution as such; or, as enables churchwardens and overseers, by order of any two justices confirmed by sessions, to take, seize, and dispose of his goods and chattels, or to receive the rents and profits of his lands."—*Ibid.* Page 69.

"The mother of every child born a bastard shall be bound to maintain such child until the age of sixteen, and all relief granted to such child, while under

sixteen, to be considered as granted to the mother."—*Ibid.* Page 71.

"All relief to the wife, or child under sixteen, considered to be given to the husband of such wife or the father of such child."—*Ibid.* Page 60.

"Any relief given to the child of any widow, to be considered as given to such widow."—*Ibid.* Page 61.

"In any parish or union under the controul of guardians, or of a select vestry, it shall not be lawful for any Justices to order relief from the poor-rates."—*Ibid.* Page 59.

"Not long ago a poor woman was found by the porter lying at full length in a fit in the confinement cell of the Bath Union workhouse. The poor creature said that she had seen something in the cell which had so frightened her as to throw her into the fit. It is seen at once from such cases as these how barbarous and inhuman a practice is that of shutting up females in such places throughout the night. If they are to be confined, why not confine them merely during the day? Such imprisonment may prove the death of a timid and superstitious female."—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath)*, in the "*Times*," August 25, 1840.

"I have seen a very aged and sick woman sitting up in her bed, and heard her complaining bitterly of the cruelty of her not being allowed a nightgown to put on. At the same time she had on a very small, thin, short garment that only reached half-way down her arms and just below her chest. She died a few days after."—*Ibid.*

"I have known a child four years old, looking the picture of wretchedness and sickness, to be brought out of the house by its indignant mother, with its little back covered with weals and bruises, which had been inflicted after its being plunged into a cistern, or cask, of cold water, for wetting its bed during sickness. I have heard this mother state, that she twice attempted to obtain redress, but in vain. The first time, she informed me, that she went to the board-room with her child in her arms, she was prevented going in by the Relieving Officer and Master, who said, 'Oh, you are come here to make a fuss about your child, are you? But you shall be disappointed, you shall not go in.' The second time she went, (not having the child with her, on account of its being so unwell,) she was allowed to go before the board, when, she informed me, the persons who so treated



the child received no reproof whatever.”  
—*Ibid.*

“I know that one poor woman in the Hoxne Union had been ill a fortnight before her husband could contrive to get an ‘order’ for the Union Surgeon; the Guardian had got a sore throat, and a cold, and could not go ten miles to the house, or ‘*he could have managed it!*’ Now the poor man has got the proper order, the Surgeon informs him that it is too late, and he has the satisfaction to hear that his wife must die, and leave him with three or four helpless children, in grateful remembrance of the New Poor-Law!”—*Letters of a Suffolk Juror.*

“I know an infirm old man (between 70 and 80) of a most excellent character, who receives 2s. and a loaf per week, from the Union. A short time ago he had the opportunity of earning, for two or three days in one week, 6d. a-day. This was reported to the Relieving Officer, when his allowance was immediately stopped. Not being again able to earn anything, he applied to the Board, and his pay was resumed; but the Relieving Officer told him that if he heard of his earning as much as a single 6d. he would immediately take it off.”—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts's Letter in the "Times,"* September 15, 1840.

“I have known a little boy, eight or nine years old, to be flogged most cruelly for three days successively, for complaining to the Guardians of his having been unjustly beaten. A man, who witnessed this cruel treatment, declared to me he shed tears at the sight. Many others witnessed it.”—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts, in the "Times,"* August 25, 1840.

“An aged woman brought into the House an ounce of tea. It was discovered by the matron that she had it about her person, when she was desired to give it up; and because she demurred about doing so, she was repeatedly struck so violently as to be obliged to exclaim, ‘Oh, Mrs. —, you will break my arm!’” —*Ibid.*

“I have heard from those who witnessed it, of a poor female cripple being hurled down headlong in the yard upon rough stones, because she did not go quite fast enough to the confinement cell.”—*Ibid.*

“I have been informed by a woman, of her having been driven away from the fire, at which she was standing and complaining of illness, out to the cold place, to resume her work, being told, with an oath, that if she didn't work, she should

not eat; and I have seen this woman, who was known on account of bodily disease to be unfit to be in so cold a place, lying, a day or two after, dangerously ill, in a sick ward, and upon my inquiring what was the matter with her, I have had it replied to me, by the nurse, who was applying leeches to her temples, and by several others in the ward, that she was very ill, and that her illness had no doubt been occasioned by her sitting so long at oakum-picking in that bitterly cold outhouse. This unfortunate sufferer had given evidence in the course of the investigation by the Assistant-Commissioner, and, while lying sick, she said to me, ‘Oh, Sir, I am determined, as long as I stay in this house, not to tell anything, so great has been the persecution and cruel usage I have received since I gave evidence.’” —*Ibid.*

“I know a case, at this moment, of a poor man, a widower, who has been in agony for six weeks with an eye that must perish; he has applied to the Relieving Officer repeatedly to no purpose; the Board is seven miles from his residence, but if he were able to get to it, it would be useless, as, without the ear of the officer, there is ‘no admittance there.’ When he has applied, the answer has been, ‘Oh! if you can afford to pay a doctor, you can do without relief!’ ‘Why, Sir, you would not have granted me the Union Surgeon if I had asked you!’ And was this poor man to lose his eye without an attempt to save it? Is sight less a blessing to a poor man than to a rich one?”—*Letters of a Suffolk Juror on the New Poor-Law, 1838.*

“Moreover, I beg to remark, that the original resolution of the Morpeth Board, that the poor should not have the decencies of Christian burial, is yet in full force; it is *unrepealed in the minutes of the Union to this hour*, and forms a part of the present standing regulations, of this same humane and immaculate Board!” —*Blakey's "Controversial Letters with the Morpeth Board," 1837.*

“About a fortnight ago, a woman came out of the ‘house’ under the following circumstances:—While she was out in the yard, the porter went, unseen by her, into the ward, and snatched up her baby, only eight months old, and carried it away. She did not discover the robbery until the porter had arrived at the other side of the yard door, where the unfeeling monster stood ridiculing the anguish of the parent, whose cries were nearly making her, for

hours, an inmate of the 'black hole.'"—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts in the "Times,"* Sept. 15, 1840.

"Anything and everything calculated to annoy the unfortunate inmates of a Poor-Law Bastile is adopted. Nothing is overlooked that may have a tendency to brutalize them. The withholding of the *baptismal* right from the pauper infants, which circumstance also involves the right of Christian burial, is but *one* of the *many* attempts now being made to undermine and destroy every principle of Christianity."—*Anti-Malthusian Bloodsucker's Letter*, Sept. 19, 1840.

"At a recent audit, (in St. George's, Southwark,) only a few weeks ago, the auditor, Mr. Meymott, said he could not allow the paltry sum of sixpence, weekly, to a poor old woman nearly eighty years old, for snuff; this had been allowed for several years, as the doctor had stated it to be comparatively necessary to the old creature's existence."—*Day's "Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law,"* 1838.

"*Elizabeth Aspin*, aged 57, a widow, being very ill last November (1836), took a medical certificate to the Board, and they gave her 1s. 6d. per week, for two weeks. At the end of that time, not being well, the Board undertook to show its professional skill in medicine. It was suggested that the 1s. 6d. per week was *feeding the disorder*, and that if they gave the woman nothing, she would get rapidly better! This was accordingly acted upon. A week or so after, the woman was fast sinking to the grave for want of food."—*Blakey's "Letters with the Morpeth Board,"* 1837.

"*John Coates*, Morpeth, aged 86, now *stone blind*, and *otherwise seriously diseased*, kept from parochial relief till within these two months by the industry of a daughter. Her hands are now tied with him. The Board have allowed two shillings per week for them both, to keep themselves in house-rent, clothes, fuel, and food!"—*Ibid.*

"Lord Wynford mentioned a case which had occurred in Suffolk, and been, as he said, proved before a Committee of the House, in which a Relieving Officer had allowed an old man of ninety to die of want. An indictment would, as he said, have prevented that monster from continuing in office."—*Rev. Edmund Dewdney's Letter to the Duke of Richmond*, May 12, 1840.

"Now, the man without work (and with the snow on the ground for six weeks

it was impossible for every man to have work,) has no allowance, he is offered the 'House' only—take that or *nothing*!"—*Letters of a Suffolk Juror*, 1838.

"*Elizabeth Aspin*.—The statement of the Board of Guardians is, that in consequence of this poor woman's having three grown-up daughters at home, they would not relieve her wants. It is implied in this statement that the Board are wishful they should be sent from home, to follow some honest and creditable employment; a very good wish, if there had been any truth or sincerity in it. Now I have good evidence to show that the only recommendation the Board ever gave, in this case was, *that this poor and helpless woman was to procure a subsistence by the open prostitution of her own children*! Yes! Let this be known throughout the length and breadth of the land, that the *Morpeth Union recommended an infirm old woman to live by the open profligacy of her own offspring*! What horrid brutality!"—*Blakey's "Controversial Letters with the Morpeth Board,"* 1837.

"A woman of good character, who had come out of the 'House' for the day, informed me, that their condition became more and more wretched every day, and that their unhappy lot is their talk from morning to night: this woman has frequently told me how happy she should be if she could only get an allowance of 1s. 6d. a week out of the House: she has several times applied for it, but in vain; for having boldly expressed her dislike to the House in the presence of the Guardians, and at other times spoken in unfavourable terms of it, she is a marked character, and in the workhouse will no doubt be made to live and die. She, with tears, declared to me, she should be glad to be sent to prison (if not for sin), knowing how much more comfortable she should be there. She is 65 years of age."—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath), in the "Times,"* Sept. 15, 1840.

"I have read of a Board of Guardians actually petitioning the Commissioners to be allowed to give temporary out-relief where a number of workmen had been thrown out of employment, who, with their families, were walking from house to house, begging for the very means of existence which had been withheld from them by the regulations of the Poor-Law Commissioners. The prayer of the petition was not granted!"—*Anti-Malthusian Bloodsucker's Letter*.

"Who ever heard before of any new



law without compensation to the sufferers? There is compensation to the sufferers from Railroads; to the sufferers from Municipal Reform; to the sufferers from Slave Abolition; there is compensation allotted, by Act of Parliament, to every known interference in the vested rights of others,—but the vested rights of the poor are never regarded. The old Poor-Law was passed after years of injustice, inflicted by the confiscation of the revenues of the Monasteries, and the various other properties of the poor, which confiscation was begun by that remorseless tyrant, Henry VIII., continued under the reign of his pious son, Edward VI., and which the vilely-calumniated Mary did not live long enough to redress; and even the old Poor-Law was not extorted from the Parliament of the pure virgin, Elizabeth, until the 43d year of her benignant reign. This same virgin, who, when playing her pranks, at the matured age of 38 years, caused her Parliament to pass an Act, that any ‘natural’ child of hers should inherit the crown! And now, by the New Law, the mother of a natural child has a very uncertain chance of escaping the whole charge for the maintenance, unless she should in despair commit a crime that I shall not mention.”—*The Suffolk Juror*.

“Mrs. Baker, an industrious and deserving widow, with four children, who had done without relief for some time, applied to the Board of St. George’s, Southwark, for a little assistance in the middle of the last severe winter, but was told she must come into the ‘House;’ however reluctantly, she was compelled to accept it, and was actually kept during the eleven weeks she was there a perfect prisoner; and when she begged she might be permitted to see her children, she was refused, and not allowed during the whole time. This was of course intended to drive her upon her own resources. Poor woman! we have liberated her since.”—*Day’s “Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law,”* 1838.

“The inhabitants of Bath entered into a subscription to give the inmates of the Union a dinner on Christmas-day, but were prevented by a positive order from the Poor-Law Commissioners.”—*Ibid*.

“I met with a poor woman the other day:—‘What is the matter with you, you look half-starved?’ ‘Why, Sir, my husband is always afflicted with the rheumatism, and can never earn more than 14*d.* a-day when in full work; but now he has nothing to do, nor has he had for five weeks past, and we have had a sick

daughter at home, that we are much distressed.’ ‘What allowance have you?’ ‘My husband went to the Board, when he had been out of work a fortnight; it took him five hours to walk the seven miles, and the Board granted us one stone of flour a-week! It took him longer to walk home, and he was so jaded that he could hardly get to bed, the torture was so great. We have had three stone of flour in five weeks!’ ‘And how much money?’ ‘Not one farthing!’ ‘Do you mean to say that you have been allowed only three stone of flour in five weeks for three persons?’ ‘I do! indeed, Sir, it is true!’ Now for my figures. In five weeks there are thirty-five days; and three persons and three meals a day will stand  $35 + 3 \times 3 = 315$  meals, to be made out of 42lbs. of flour, not quite  $2\frac{1}{4}$  ounces for each meal: no fire, and consequently, cold water.”—*The Suffolk Juror*, 1838.

“Jane Alexander, aged 36, was deserted by her husband, and left with two children, one about four years old, and the other nine months. Her father is a poor working man, near Cruickham, and hearing of his daughter’s melancholy condition, offered to give her lodgings for self and children, if the Board of Guardians would allow her what would keep them with food and clothes. In Dec. last (1836), the Board gave this poor woman two shillings a-week for herself and two infant children, which is about one penny a-day for each member of the family for food and necessaries!! She had a distance of fifty miles to travel with these children, and she applied for a trifling sum to pay her expenses; the Board refused to give her anything, but generously offered to lend her four shillings, which was to be paid out of her weekly allowance!”—*Blakey’s “Letters with the Morpeth Board.”*

“Elizabeth Scott, aged 25, recently confined with an illegitimate child, applied to me for temporary relief to keep her from actual famine. The Board had given her one shilling and sixpence per week for herself and baby; out of this she had one shilling to pay for lodging, which left just sixpence per week for herself (only three weeks confined) and child, to purchase food for seven days!! The poor girl seemed so exhausted, for want of sustenance, as not to be able to undergo the requisite examination as to her settlement!”—*Ibid*.

“MORPETH, April 5, 1837.—I, Robert Pender, of Felton, do hereby solemnly

declare before God, that in the month of November last, Mr. Samuel Donkin, of Bywell, did, as a Guardian of the Morpeth Union, request me to *horsewhip* the late William Minto, and George Hume, when placed under my care in the village of Felton."—*Blakey's Controversial Letters with the Morpeth Board.*

"And in this way they use the aged men (in Stowmarket Union workhouse); they are placed in one of the large rooms, and the little boys have a strap of leather, and by the command of the master of the workhouse, the boys are to strike the old men as they are marched past them."

—*Rev. J. R. Stephens's Sermon at Hyde, Feb. 17, 1839.*

"I have seen women, with trifling indisposition (certainly not fever) upon them, put in a fever ward into beds adjoining those occupied by persons dying of fever. Should it be pretended that the patients were not dying of fever, I reply that it is well known to many that I was advised by the master to discontinue visiting the ward for fear of infection. After many had died, the nurse of the ward caught the fever and died."—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath) in the "Times," August 11, 1840.*

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"The wretched plead against us; multitudes  
Countless and vehement, the sons of God,  
Our brethren!"—COLERIDGE'S SIBYLLINE LEAVES.

"We have offended, oh! my countrymen!  
We have offended very grievously,  
And been most tyrannous. From east to west,  
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven!"—*Ibid.*

"Mr. D. Whittle Harvey, the City Police-Commissioner, appeared before the Lord Mayor yesterday, accompanied by some of his officers, to lay complaints against the authorities of the West London Union, for refusing to shelter several unfortunate and destitute persons who had been found, a night or two ago, exposed to the inclement weather which has lately prevailed. The authorities of the Union told the officers to take the poor sufferers to the 'straw yard,' a place unknown to the law, and one into which Mr. Harvey has resolved no policeman shall ever conduct the houseless poor under his management. The officers of this Union actually muffled the bell, to prevent the poor creatures from annoying them during the late severe weather."—Feb. 24, 1841.

"On Tuesday last we noticed seven of the inmates of the Bradford Bastile, drawing a water-cart, laden with water, the distance from the well to the workhouse being about a quarter-of-a-mile; four of them were geared to the shafts, and the other three were in the traces. Three out of the seven are idiots, and one of them is also deaf and dumb."—*Northern Star*, March 6, 1841.

"He recollected that a Magistrate from Wales complained to him of a Union no fewer than twenty-two miles in length. Now, supposing the workhouse to be situate in the middle, what were they to think of a law which sent starving men and women eleven miles from their homes. Before they could expect relief, too, they

must have sold up every rag and stick of their wretched cottages, or else they would be interpreted into people possessing property."—*Mr. Walter, Crown and Anchor*, March 11, 1841.

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[From the *Merthyr Guardian*, April 6, 1839.]

A great sensation has been produced at Blaina, Abergavenny, and the surrounding neighbourhood, by the death of a poor man of the name of William Nicholas, who had, for the last four or five weeks, been sleeping in a hovel and other places, in the Blaina Iron Works, without receiving necessary sustenance. About the 14th ult. he was taken ill, from want of food and the impure nature of the air of the cabin and other places in which he slept. The facts, as far as we have been able to collect them, are as follow:—

On Tuesday week great complaints were made to Messrs. Brown, by the men employed at the works, of the filthy and dirty state the deceased was in, and the unbearable stench arising therefrom. Mr. Thomas Brown immediately caused application to be made to the deputy relieving officer, James Thomas, residing at Blaina, stating deceased's illness, and requesting his immediate removal, but he took no steps in the matter further than sending him food. On Tuesday, the 26th, Mr. Thomas Brown wrote to Mr. Watkins the Relieving Officer, stating the case and desiring the pauper's immediate removal, as deceased's life was endangered by remaining in such an unwholesome at-



mosphere. The next day, Mr. Brown wrote another letter to him as follows:—

“SIR,—I have to request your immediate attention to a poor man who is in a destitute condition, and has been lying in one of our miners’ cabins several days. The man’s life will be sacrificed unless he is immediately attended to.

“Your obedient servant,

“March 27th, 1839. “THOMAS BROWN.

“I have previous to this given your deputy notice, which is not attended to.”

On the return of the messenger he gave the following statement to Mr. Brown:—

“On Wednesday morning I took a note from Mr. Thomas Brown, by his request, to the Relieving Officer, with instructions to deliver it into his hands. After he had perused the note he said he had spoken to the magistrates, at the Board of Guardians, the week before, at Abergavenny, respecting the poor man, who was in the cabin, being in a destitute and filthy state; when Mr. Gabb told him they would not allow him to send him to the workhouse; and that he had their orders for him to stay where he was. I asked him if the surgeon had seen him. He answered in the affirmative, but said he could give him no medicine to do him good. I asked him if he had sufficient food and attendance, when he told me James Thomas had procured everything necessary, and had employed a woman to take his victuals regularly; that he had had him washed, and had put on him some fresh clothes. He said that he had done all that he had the power of doing; but the next day, Thursday, he was going to the meeting of the Board of Guardians at Abergavenny, and would lay Mr. Brown’s letter before them, and receive their instructions what was to be done with him. I told him the men working near him were much inconvenienced, and did not like to go near him, and therefore I thought he ought to be removed. He said, it would be impossible for him to get him, in his filthy state, into a house at Blaina, but he had no doubt if he was at Abergavenny he could get lodgings for him.”

The deceased left the cabin on Saturday morning, and was seen that morning leaning on the palings of a house some distance from the cabin, and afterwards found lying in a ditch by the house, and there died before assistance could be procured. On Monday an inquest was held on the body, before Mr. Thomas Hughes, Coroner for the county of Monmouth.

The fact of the deceased’s having been found dead in the ditch was proved by two witnesses.

Thomas Parry.—This day week, about seven o’clock, I went to the works, and found deceased in the cabin. I asked him what he did there, but could get no sensible reply. He said, James Thomas had brought him there. I then went to James Thomas, and asked him to have deceased removed. He replied that he had nothing more to do with him, as he had reported the case to the Guardians at Abergavenny. I saw some children bring him something. The deceased was in that cabin on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. I took a note from Mr. Brown to the Relieving Officer, and left it at Watkins’s house.

Mr. Thomas Brown.—I heard there was a man in a destitute condition in one of our cabins, and I sent a note to the Relieving Officer apprising him of it; and on Wednesday I sent another note desiring his removal, but without effect.

Mr. Rowland, surgeon of Nantyglow, sworn.—On Friday week, as surgeon to the Board, I went to examine the deceased. I saw him with Mr. James Thomas, with whom he was walking away, and as that was the case, I did not make an examination. I understood he was a great annoyance to the workmen, being in an extremely filthy state. I also understood that he incommoded Messrs. Brown by occupying the ash-pit. This day I have seen the body, and from the extreme emaciation of his person, and the way in which he has been living, I think he died from a worn-out constitution, which may have arisen from want of proper food and sustenance, and his death must have been hastened by being surrounded by filth, want of cleanliness, and breathing an impure atmosphere.

In consequence of some observations from Mr. Thomas Brown, to the effect that the examination of witnesses had not been carried to a sufficient length, the Coroner asked if he thought there could be any evidence given that would seriously implicate the Relieving Officer?

Mr. T. Brown answered, Yes; that the Relieving Officer was much to blame in not taking the deceased to clean lodgings, or removing him when he offered him the use of a horse, a man, and a spring-covered cart, to remove him where he thought proper; that he would have removed deceased himself, but could not take the responsibility; and at the same time warned him of the consequences of neglect.

Mr. Watkins, the Relieving Officer, stated—On Wednesday week I received

the first intimation from Mr. Brown of the state of the deceased. I reported the case to the Board of Guardians on their next meeting at Abergavenny. The Board thought he was not in a fit state for removal to the workhouse. I was told to relieve him, and to find lodgings if I could; if I could not find lodgings, I was to relieve him where he was. I said I could not find lodgings. I attended the Board the next Thursday, and again received the same instructions. I laid before them the letters I had received from Mr. Brown. I described to them the state deceased was in.

Mr. James Brown here remarked it was the duty of the Relieving Officer to remove such persons, and thought there was a great direlection of duty in the case.

The Coroner said the Relieving Officer was to find proper food for such persons until they were in a fit state to be removed to the workhouse. In this case the Relieving Officer had acted wrong; but he hoped it was an error of judgment, and not from wilful neglect, and he thought if the Board had understood in what condition the man was, they would have given orders to remove him.

J. Thomas said he had done everything he could for deceased.

Mr. James Brown informed the Coroner, that about ten days ago he wrote to Mr. Williams, of Nantyglo, one of the Guardians, telling him of the deplorable situation deceased was in, and begging his interference with the Relieving Officer to get him removed to the workhouse, but received no reply. He also asked James Thomas if he had stated to the Board of Guardians at Abergavenny, that he told him that unless deceased was removed from the premises he would kick him off; and if the vicar replied, "If anything happens to this man, I will see him (Mr. Brown) prosecuted for manslaughter!"

J. Thomas replied, "I did tell the Board you said you would turn the man out, and the vicar said, 'If he does, I will take care he shall be indicted for manslaughter.'"

Mr. T. Brown here said that J. Thomas told him it was the opinion of the Board that he should expel all vagrants who came to the works, by force; and that on Friday he employed men to take deceased to the constable's house, but he refused any care of him.

Coroner (to J. Thomas, constable).—It was your bounden duty to remove the man to the workhouse.

Mr. J. Brown then read an extract from the 4th Annual Report of the Poor-Law Commissioners, p. 155, showing that it was the especial duty of peace-officers to conduct destitute persons to places where relief would be administered.

The Coroner concurred with Mr. Brown.

Mr. T. J. Phillips suggested that one of the witnesses examined was not on oath.

The Coroner said, if it was so it had escaped him; but his reason for not swearing so many witnesses was, that if they were sworn, though their evidence might not be at all material, their expenses would have to be paid.

The witness mentioned was afterwards sworn.

William Williams stated, that he was by the cabin door one night last week, and overheard Watkins tell the deceased to make himself comfortable there that night, for he would be whipped off in the morning.

Watkins admitted having used some such expression; but said it was only to hear what reply deceased would make.

At the conclusion of the examination the Coroner remarked, "I have no hesitation in saying that no man could have acted with greater credit, greater humanity, or greater kindness, than Mr. Brown has, with reference to this poor man."

At this stage of the proceedings the jury left the room for the purpose of viewing the cabin in which the deceased had been staying. On their return the foreman stated it to be a beastly place—cold, wet, and filthy, and not fit to put a pig in.

The jury having expressed a wish to go into another room to consider their verdict, the coroner ordered one; and said, if they thought of returning any stronger verdict than one of censure on the conduct of the Relieving Officer, he should consider it his duty to go much further into the evidence, and examine more witnesses than he had done, and then the case could not be finished that day. The jury then retired, and after an absence of about a quarter-of-an-hour, returned the following verdict:—

"That on Saturday morning last, the 30th day of March, in the year 1839, in the parish of Aberystwith, in the county of Monmouth, the said William Nicholas was found dead; that there are no marks of violence to be found on his person, and that the death of the said William Nicho-



las was accelerated by the want of proper food and nourishment."

The body of the unfortunate deceased was buried the same evening.

[From the *Times*, April 11, 1839.]

A case of great importance, and which is attended with many extraordinary circumstances, was settled a few days ago by Mr. William Moody, the barrister, it having been referred to him for arbitration under an order of the Bath quarter-sessions, dated the 4th of January last. The award was made an order of court last week, on the motion of Mr. Stone, before D. Jardine, Esq., the recorder of the city and borough of Bath. The following are the particulars:—

Two years back this month a poor fellow, named William Withers, whilst ill, was removed on the outside of a coach by an overseer of Walcot Union, in Somersetshire, from the workhouse of that place to the poor-house of Clerkenwell. He travelled by night without any other protection from cold than an old great coat. When he was admitted into the latter place he was in a state of collapse that placed his life in the utmost peril. He complained of coldness, numbness, and pain in the upper and lower extremities, and was unable to make the least use of them. His hands, extending considerably above the wrists, were of a livid colour, approaching to black, and without heat. The feet were in the same state. His nose and upper lip bore the same appearance, and his pulse were scarcely perceptible. The parish surgeons, Messrs. Spencer and Taylor, were immediately called in to see the unfortunate sufferer, and from the appearances described, the former gentleman states in his evidence, "I was apprehensive that the blood was so far coagulated in the vessels, and the vitality of the parts destroyed, that mortification would almost certainly ensue. All the means which seemed best calculated to restore the vital energies, both generally and locally, were carefully and sedulously employed. After some days it became manifest, from the separating process commencing, and a deep discoloured state of the hands and feet, that mortification was inevitable, since which it has been necessary, in consequence of the mortified condition of them, to remove them by amputation, as well as the feet at the ankles. The upper lip is restored to a natural state, as is also the nose, excepting a portion of the tip which has sphacelated and

fallen off. He has subsequently been attacked with erysipelas of the face and head, of a dangerous character. He has thrice suffered from diarrhoea and once had a pleuritic seizure, from all of which he has recovered. He is still confined to his bed in consequence of the wounds of the extremities and extensive exfoliation of bone, and the chance of his ever recovering is hardly to be expected."

The evidence of poor Withers is as follows:—"In the month of February, 1837, I left the city of Bristol, with the intention of travelling to London, but was then so ill with the rheumatism as to be unable to proceed farther than Bath; and on my application there for relief I was admitted into the poor-house of the parish of Walcot, in that city, and placed in the sick ward, where I continued six weeks very ill, and chiefly in bed, under the care of the medical attendant of the place, by whose orders I took some opening pills only; but not being able to sleep, I informed him that I had taken opium pills to obtain rest before I saw him, and he then furnished me with some of that medicine. On or about the 7th of the month of April following, whilst lying ill in bed, the governor of the said poor-house informed me at four o'clock in the afternoon that I was to be removed that evening outside a stage-coach, and inquired if I felt well enough to go in that way to London, and I replied, 'Yes, if well wrapped up to protect me from the inclemency of the weather,' which was then severely cold. About six o'clock on that evening I was furnished with a great coat belonging to the establishment, but it was not near large enough to afford me that protection from cold which my limbs required, and I was placed outside of a coach from the White Hart at Bath, accompanied by the Assistant Overseer of Walcot, who sat on the leeward side at the back of the coach, and I on the windward side. There was a considerable fall of snow and a severely cold wind. When I had travelled about 17 miles my feet and legs were very cold, and I lost the use of my hands so as to be incapable of getting them inside my coat or pocket to procure warmth. At that time there was inside the coach a pauper who was being removed from Walcot to Kent. He was in a consumption, which, being ascertained by a gentleman who was also an inside passenger, he left the vehicle, being afraid to ride with a man so afflicted. I then entreated the Overseer to let me go inside

the coach, telling him the dreadful suffering I was enduring, and that if something was not speedily done I should perish ; to which the overseer replied, 'It is not so cold as it has been,' and refused to allow my request. I continued in the same state all night, repeatedly imploring him to be placed inside, but without success. At one place where the coach stopped the overseer, who got off the coach, sent me some beer by a servant, but as I could not use my hands, I did not get it. At Newbury, where I arrived about one o'clock in the morning, I got off the coach with the assistance of two men, one on each side of me, and was by them helped into a tap-room. The waiter told me to have something to drink, and he humanely gave me a glass of brandy and water, which was held up to my mouth to swallow. On the coach leaving Newbury I was again placed on the coach by two men, and I continued there, without taking anything further, until I arrived at the Golden-cross, Charing-cross, at six o'clock in the morning, when I had a glass of gin, which was also held up to my mouth by a stranger. The overseer afterwards removed me in a coach to Clerkenwell workhouse, where I have since remained. Through that dreadful journey I have lost my hands and feet."

Mr. Prendergast, the barrister, produced to the arbitrator the order upon which the removal of the pauper took place. It was dated 17th March, 1837.

Mr. Hill said, there was no doubt that Withers's settlement was Clerkenwell; but he contended that he must be thrown on the parish of Walcot for life, in consequence of the removal not having been in conformity to law. Under the clause 79 of the 4th and 5th William IV., c. 76, it is enacted, "That from and after the 1st day of November, 1834, no person shall be removed from any parish or workhouse, by reason of his being so chargeable to, or relieved therein, until 21 days after a notice in writing of his being so chargeable or relieved, accompanied by a copy or counterpart of the order of removal of such person, and by a copy of the examination upon which such order was made, shall have been given to the overseers or guardians of the parish to which such order is directed."

Evidence having been given that no more than 10 days elapsed from the receipt of the notice of the pauper's chargeability to Walcot and his delivery at Clerkenwell workhouse,

Mr. Moody decided that the objection to the notice was fatal, and that the order of removal must, consequently, be quashed, and he ordered that the costs of the appeal and the charges for the maintenance of Withers up to the present time be paid in full by the overseers of Walcot, who are likewise directed to pay in future 5s. a-week to the overseers of Clerkenwell until the pauper can be removed thence back to Bath.

There is no probability of the pauper ever being consigned again to the tender mercies of the Walcot overseers, as his health is not likely to permit of his removal, and that he will shortly sink under his heavy afflictions. He speaks in the highest terms of the medical officers, the master of the workhouse, and all others who have had anything to do with him since his confinement in Clerkenwell, and fervently prays that he may die under their protection. He is not restricted to diet; whatever he asks for he has. If he fancies fish, flesh, or fowl, he is supplied with them. He smokes a great deal, and has two pots of porter a-day, besides two glasses of gin or wine, as he thinks proper. Such things, it is said, are absolutely necessary to keep him alive.

The costs arising from the brutality of the Walcot overseers will fall little short of £500.

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"Are they, my Lord Duke, locked up as well as separated in hospitals? If not, if separation be sufficient in a hospital, what makes imprisonment needful in a workhouse?"—*Rev. Edmund Dewdney's Letter to the Duke of Richmond.*

"A poor old woman, a short time before last Christmas, put a grandchild, three years old, into the Bath workhouse, conceiving that the child as well as herself would be benefited by it. After it had been there a few weeks, she went to see it, but was not permitted to do so; again she tried, but in vain; but the third time she would not go without seeing it, when she discovered the child to be so altered for the worse, that she immediately took it out. I have seen a gentleman who advised the grandmother to put it in the workhouse, who declares that he never, in his life, beheld a healthier, heartier little thing when it left home, and that when it returned from the workhouse at the end of six weeks, it was a most wretched object, a comparative skeleton, and evidently would soon have died under



the barbarous treatment it had met with. Its arms, and back, and loins were covered with bruises. I have seen several of the old woman's neighbours who bear the same testimony. One informed me (into whose house the child was carried on its way home) that the little creature appeared quite dreading and stupid, standing while she spoke to it with its hands up to its head as if trying to screen the sides of its face. This led her to examine it, when she found it covered with bruises about its arms and back, which told her the cause of its singular manner and position was fear. Another told me, she was sure it would not have lived another week, it was so thin and weak, it appeared quite a cripple. I have since seen the little thing of late, and wretched as is its dwelling, its cheeks are as rosy and ruddy as possible, now that it is well used again and happy. It was shown to a Guardian, who, I am told, brought the case before the Board; but nothing was done, although the Guardians had brought before them the cruel treatment of a former child which had been so beaten by the same woman in the workhouse. This nurse and guardian of little helpless innocents was kept in office until her death, an event which occurred a short time ago. She died in great horror of mind. There is no doubt many have been destroyed by such merciless protectors. How barbarous and unnatural a thing to take the little creatures away from their parents, their natural guardians, and to commit them to the care of those who care not for them. My family and I have frequently remarked how sickly the little things looked; and how could it be expected to be otherwise? when there are 60 or 70 together in a room which they never quit, and when they are so barbarously treated?"—*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath) to the Author, dated Oct. 9, 1840.*

"The nearest relative is not allowed to carry the least thing, not even a bit of fruit, or a bun, into the House, to a dying person. I have had it said to me—'Oh, Sir! if I had but an orange to suck to moisten my dry mouth!' and oranges I have stealthily carried to the sick and dying. A friend of mine carried a short time ago a little snuff to a man blind and dumb, whom he had long known, and who had taken it for 25 years. He was not allowed to give it. He wrote to the Board, and received for answer, that it was against the 'rules' of the House to

allow it, nor could it be allowed unless the medical officer stated it to be necessary for the man's health."—*Ibid.*

"I have known a dying man get out of bed in the night in the dark (for no light is burnt), and fall prostrate on the floor. He died early on the following morning,—I mean six or seven hours after. A man in the same ward who heard him fall, and cried out for a light and help, was sharply reproved for making such a noise and fuss."—*Ibid.*

"A poor idiot woman, aged 34, far gone in the family way, went into the Union House for 17 days, when she asked leave to go out to see her father (aged 84) and mother. This was on a Wednesday, and on the Friday following, she walked back six miles, when on her arrival she was put into the Probationary Ward to be washed. She had hard work to walk these six miles—was near falling several times the last mile—and being scrubbed down with cold water on her return, was her reception instead of meat and drink! Another woman and two children were also waiting in this ward of weariness at the time, who stated, that the porter came about nine o'clock that evening, and called her and her two children out, and brought a small bed and bedding and threw down, and said, 'There, A. B., you must lie there to night;' and as he locked her in, said to the other woman, 'She should not have gone out, and then she would not have had to lie there.' The poor woman herself told me the same, and added, that she grew worse and worse, and tried all she could to make some person hear her, but in vain; and she was quite alone all night, and thought she must have died. But her child was born between the church striking two and three, for she heard every hour it struck that night; and she never pulled off any of her clothes till after the birth of her child, when she took off her apron, and with that and her handkerchief she wrapped up the babe, and took all the care of it she could. But no one came near her till seven o'clock in the morning, when a poor girl found her alive and that was all. She had not had even a chamberpot to make use of; but all was spread over the room just as nature and her exhausted strength had left it. Several women just cleansed up the place a little and called two men: one of whom gave me the following account of the transaction. He was cook that morning, and after boiling and serving out the

skilly, he asked if all were supplied? and 'Yes, yes, yes,' was the answer; but, after a few minutes, a girl said 'No; there is poor A. B. locked up in the 'Probationary Ward:' run with this basin of skilly.' He did; and found her as before stated. He said there was a great bustle and whispering with the women, and presently he was called; and the porter and he, one at the head, and the other at the feet, carried the poor woman up stairs into the lying-in-ward. The nurse had got a blanket in her hand, and this man said, as he went up stairs, 'Lay down that blanket and help carry the poor woman.' But she said she could not lay it down. He then suspected, and afterwards found, she had got the child in the blanket; and, as he came down stairs, he said to the porter who helped him to carry the poor woman up stairs, 'By what authority did you lock that poor woman up in this place, so far away from all the rest where no one could see or hear anything of her?' But he could not answer the question. But the nurses and matron, to screen themselves, made up a report that the woman came in late and could not be attended to; and that they had no idea of anything of the kind happening; and that the matron said she went to look at her at eleven o'clock that night when she was asleep and very well; and that when she was found in labour in the morning, between six and seven o'clock, her child was born before they could fetch the doctors, &c., &c. When this tale was told by them to the Guardians, they would, *of course*, believe no other than their own tools; but when the poor woman told every one of the paupers, when she was well enough between whiles, that she had been very bad indeed at eleven o'clock, for she heard the church clock strike eleven, and all was still, she could hear no one, nor could she make any one hear or answer, although she called and screamed as loud as she could, —they were, I believe, in a great fright for fear she might die; but she recovered and lived some 8, 10, or 12 months after. Since, several of the women have told me they did not believe she ever got over it; but that from suckling her child upon the cruel, pinching dietary, and being compelled to wash and work so hard, she got worse and worse, weaker and weaker, till at last she sank under it and died, as they believe, from want of proper food and nourishment, as thousands of others have done; and the last I heard of her child,

was that it was not likely to live."—*Extract of a Letter from a South County Correspondent to the Author*, dated Oct. 10, 1840.

"He had lately heard of three girls of fifteen or sixteen years of age who had become the mothers of children to youths of twenty-five or twenty-six. Now, he would ask their Lordships whether it was not most unjust to compel the mothers in such a case to support their children?"—*Lord Wynford, House of Lords*, May 1, 1839.

"The 'discretionary' power which the Commissioners profess to leave in our (the Guardians') hands of giving out-door relief in 'cases of urgent necessity,' is a mere nullity, for it is now said, not only that the Relieving Officer is the ultimate judge of what is and what is not 'urgent necessity,' but, in order to shut the door still more closely against all benevolent interference on the part of the Guardians, all cases arising from any sudden deficiency of work, from the exigencies of a large family above the age of seven, or from the wickedness of a husband in deserting his wife and children, are declared to be of that class in which the workhouse is the only alternative."—*Rev. Sir George Robinson's Letter to the Kettering Board*, Oct. 10, 1839.

"Your Grace doubtless remembers, that Coombs, a man with a large family, who at best earned but 12s. a-week, and for fifteen weeks had earned nothing whatever, applied for relief to the Guardians of Westbourne, of which he was an acknowledged pauper, but was refused, and referred to the Guardians of Portsea (the place where he was living); that he was refused also by them, and roamed about seeking for work, till at length he dropped from exhaustion on the snow and very nearly died. That then the Portsea Board, being alarmed, did what was necessary for his restoration, and, as soon as they could, passed him to his parish, where he and his family were, as usual, shut up in the workhouse and separated from each other. That till his starvation he was a strong man, but he is now enfeebled for life, a victim of oppression which defrauds and destroys the poor to enrich the wealthy."—*Rev. E. Dewdney's (of Portsea) Letter to the Duke of Richmond*, May 12, 1840.

"All we know is, that early in the week, for some reason or another, a girl 15 or 16 years of age, jumped out of a third story window (of the Union work-



house at Ludlow), at the hazard of her life, hoping to escape from something she did not like—whether it was cruel treatment or not.”—*Ludlow Standard*, Oct. 17, 1840.

“She told him that she would tell him all about their ill-using her. She told him that the doctor had only seen her *twice*, and he had never seen all her wounds. She also told him that the *Irish* woman dragged her up and down in the bed by the hair of the head, put her hand ....., and said she would pull her guts out, d—d b—h! She also told him that one day there was a man going past the window, and the Irish woman (the nurse) asked him if that was not a nice place; and said here is a d—d b—h and a w—e lying. This was when the poor patient was lying helpless in bed. She said that the Irish woman had flogged her with a *rod* and *besom-stick*, nipped her, scratched her, punched her, and that she had been used as bad as any slave.”—*Mary Wilden's (a Victim to the New Poor-Law) Description of her ill-usage in Worksoy Union Workhouse; and on whose body an inquest was held the 4th and 7th of March*, 1839.

“The Bill worked well! Yes, he had a paper there that told him so. This document was from an agricultural district, from Cheadle, in Cheshire. It was a communication from one of his boys, as he called them, by trade a mason, who was helping to build a church. This boy had sent him this fact to show how the Poor-Law worked there. He stated that while at work in the church-yard he heard the cry of murder—it was the voice of a female outside the walls. He and a companion went to the spot, and there saw a pauper mother, who, with her infant babe, had escaped from the workhouse. One of the workhouse demons was approaching to seize her and her babe to carry them back again; the woman protested that she would die sooner than allow her babe to be taken from her. The workhouse official then tried coaxing, and said if she would go back her child should not be taken from her. She yielded, and the child was again taken away. His informant and his companion went to the Cheadle workhouse, which was not quite finished; they were refused admittance, but they succeeded in seeing in one of the rooms a parcel of old men; in another, little children, varying in age from one month to ten years; the children were crying and sobbing, and wiping their

eyes, and the demons who had the care of them were, as these men informed him, lugging the poor children by the hair of the head because they were crying for their mothers!”—*Mr. Oastler's Speech at the Freemasons' Tavern*, Feb. 19, 1838.

“Last week a child died at Hereford of the small-pox, and the surviving relatives, being almost destitute, were unable to bury it; they therefore, first applied to the parish-officers, who refused to assist, and then to the magistrates, who had no power to interfere. According therefore to the law, as it now stands, the body of the child must remain above-ground. A similar instance occurred some time ago in the case of a poor woman, who was at length buried by subscription.”—*Monmouth Beacon*, Nov. 14, 1840.

“In the last week the York Town Council agreed that a shed should be erected over the felons to protect *them* from the inclemency of the weather whilst engaged in their labour. On Thursday last, at a meeting of the Board of Guardians, *Mr. Littledale*, a gentleman distinguished for his humanity and benevolence, urged before the Board the propriety of erecting a shed, under which the unfortunate paupers in the workhouse might be sheltered whilst engaged in breaking stones; and *Mr. Peacock* proposed a resolution that the committee should take into consideration the propriety of the suggestion. This very proper motion was met by *Mr. Spearman Johnstone* (Whig of course), the Guardian for Dringhouses, in a manner which showed him ill-qualified to be a Guardian of the poor. He ridiculed the proposition, remarking, ‘that if this shed was provided, the paupers would next want a billiard-room, with chairs and cushions!’”—*Yorkshire Gazette*, Dec., 1839.

“The charity dress debases the child; for, in his earliest years, he is marked and pointed out among his fellows as the poor man's child; and ostentation puts upon him the livery of pauperism. I would not use the dress so injudiciously, but I would make it the badge of merit to be won by good conduct in the school, so that the child would feel himself raised in the eyes of strangers rather than self-lowered and self-degraded.”—*W. A. Miles, Esq. His "Report" from Gloucestershire upon Hand-loom Weaving*.

“The most worthy gentleman thinks the charity dress debases the child, then why do he and his fellows affix the pauper's badge upon the children of the poor

in the Union workhouse? Why brand the honest man's clothes across the back with the pauper-mark that points him out as a poor man? Surely the livery of pauperism is not less debasing to the unfortunate adult than to the poor boy!"—*R. J. Richardson, of Salford.*

"HOW TO DEPOPULATE A HOUSE OF INDUSTRY IN DUBLIN.—'The old, infirm, and what may be termed the regular inmates of the institution, will be constantly lessening in number now that new admissions are stopped, and may be *will probably leave* when a *stricter discipline* is established in the House.'"—*Commissioners' "Report" for Ireland.*

"Phillis Blake was a woman grown. When she was beaten she was 28 years of age. The master beat her with a stick, not a rod; he beat her on her person and across her back, more than one, or two, or three blows. She had not got her clothes on; she was flogged because she was not up in the morning when he went up to her room. I mean she was in her bedroom at the time when the master entered and scolded her. *She had on only her chemise and her night-cap.* I have known the master to go down to beat her. I have seen her marked afterwards. She is now dead. She had marks of whipping on her body after her death. During her life she was never free from marks on her body. I remained with her until the time of her death. I saw the marks on her hands and across her back. *Her hands were like black kid gloves.* I fetched in the mistress to look at them. She was violently marked with a stick. I don't know of what complaint she died. She only kept her bed two days."—*Witness in the Prosecution of Mr. Miles, the Master of the Hoo Union, "Morning Herald," Jan. 7, 1841.*

"BOW-STREET.—Just as Mr. Hall was about to leave the bench, a young man, driver of cabriolet 1,161, applied to him for advice under the following circumstances:—He stated that on Sunday week last he was standing with his cab at the coach-stand, Holborn, when he was called by a man who desired he would take a female, who appeared extremely ill and near her confinement, to a house in Gerrard-street, Soho, where her sister resided, and on arriving there, he found that no such person resided there, and being ordered to take her to Westminster Hospital, he proceeded thither, but he was told that she could not be admitted. He then drove, as he was de-

sired, to the institution in Queen's-square, which, on his arrival, he found had been broken up for some time past. The poor woman was by this time in the greatest agony, and she requested him, as well as she was able, to stop at the house of some medical man from whom she could obtain relief, and knowing that such a person kept a shop in Tothill-street, he drew up at the door, but the gentleman of the house not being at home, his assistant advised him to take her to the Lying-in Hospital in the York-road, Lambeth, where, on arriving, the matron refused to receive a patient unless she could produce an order in the usual way, at the same time recommending the applicant to apply at the Lambeth workhouse. Applicant, seeing the woman getting worse and worse, drove with the greatest expedition to Lambeth workhouse, but she was refused to be admitted there also, as the parish authorities would have no such incumbrance, and being directed to take her to the St. James's workhouse, he drove to Poland-street, where, upon arriving, he discovered that she had delivered herself of a child. On explaining this circumstance, they refused to take her in or have anything to do with her, and, as he was advised, he drove off to the institution in Portugal-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields, where she was again refused, and having taken the poor creature, who then appeared entirely exhausted, to Bow-street Station-house, he explained the matter briefly to Inspector Meddlicot, who instantly dispatched a constable to St. Giles's workhouse, where she was at length admitted, but on taking her out of the cab, it was found that the infant was dead." &c.—*Conservative Journal*, Oct. 31, 1840.

"Your memorialists beg to assure you that none but those who have experienced or witnessed it, can form any idea of the distress both of body and mind which the working classes undergo;—a father looking upon the pale and sickly faces of his half-naked children, is bowed down with affliction, but how much more greatly is that affliction increased, when he hears them crying to him for that food which he has not to bestow. The powers of imagination would fail to describe the spectacles of wretchedness which are frequently presented in reality;—the house once well furnished, now nearly emptied—piece after piece of the goods having been sold to pay rent, or to satisfy the cravings of nature—and in numerous



instances, where nearly every article has been disposed of, the poor family are compelled to abandon their home, and to seek for shelter in a single room, where they are huddled together so closely, that the atmosphere becomes fetid and unwholesome, and they sink into sickness, and are frequently carried off by death. What language can portray the agony of the hearts of parents, as they watch the dying moments of their children, and see them carried off to the grave, well knowing that a want of the necessaries of life, which they could not procure, has caused the melancholy and untimely sacrifice!"—*Memorial of the Working Classes of Nottingham to the Mayor, 1840.*

"On Monday, John Stokes, the porter of the Kidderminster Union workhouse, was brought before the county magistrates on the charge of ill-treating a pauper boy in the house; named Perks, aged 8 years. From the evidence it appeared, that the child had a disease of the bladder, which gave great offence to the defendant, who had often punished the boy for the involuntary effects of the complaint. On the previous morning, groans were heard issuing from a sack hanging up from a beam, and on the Governor of the Workhouse cutting it down, the child was found doubled up within the bag, in which state the porter had kept him suspended all the morning; this ferocious act had been previously perpetrated on several other occasions."—*Ten Towns' Messenger, 1840.*

"Another great evil produced from abiding by the in-door test, and refusing temporary relief, has been the driving men away from their families, in search of employment. Some form other connections, and never return. I know cases of this kind of the most painful and distressing nature. Some have waited day after day, hoping for a change, and nothing appearing, their minds became careless, and they, by leaving their homes, have neglected their families."—"Observations on the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham," by W. Roworth, Esq., Mayor.—Published Nov., 1840.

"The poor residing in the town, who belong to other unions within a short distance, suffer very much, and are most cruelly treated, through so much power being given to the Relieving Officer. When under temporary distress, for want of employment, they applied to our Relieving Officer, and were directed to ap-

ply to their own unions. When they did so, they were told to apply in the union they were living, and with exhausted bodies, for want of food, they have been sent several miles, from one Relieving Officer to another. A female came to me, with a medical certificate, testifying her inability to work; she resided at Nottingham, and had been to our Relieving Officer to ask for relief; he told her to apply to her own union; she did so, and they told her to apply to the union in which she lived, and between them both, she obtained *no relief*."—*Ibid.*

"A family in distress, got a waggon returning empty, to where the relieving officer resided, of the Union to which they belonged; when they arrived he would neither relieve nor receive them, and the owner of the waggon had them in his house all night, and they returned the next day, as the Relieving Officer would not receive them without an order of removal."—*Ibid.*

"An old man came to my door, who had the symptoms of death in his face, and could scarcely walk: he told me that he had applied to the Relieving Officer, *to take him into the workhouse, and he had refused*, saying to him, 'Get away with you! I'll not hear your tales!' He said to me, 'For God's sake, beg of them to take me in, and *don't let me die in the street! I shall eat very little, and not live long.*' I asked him several questions, and where he was residing. I did not then send him up again to the Relieving Officer, as it was too late, but, having relieved him, told him to go again in the morning, and ask to see the other Relieving Officer, and he went away.....The infirm creature, *nearly a skeleton*, with great difficulty dragged his body up to the House again, which was nearly the two extremes of one part of the town. *His last reception I took down from his dying lips*; it was as follows:—"I stood at the door a good bit—the other door was open (the Board-room, near the Relieving Officer's door)—I thought I would go in. In a little time, the Relieving Officer observed me, and he said, *very roughly*, 'What do you want?' I said, 'I wish to come into the house, for I am friendless in a strange place.' He said, 'Be off with you.' I said, 'Pray let me stop. *I am destitute, and cannot travel.*' He said, '*Begone; don't do the same as you did before—go away, like a tramping scamp as you are; if you stay in the town ever so long, we should give you no relief.*'

These are the dying words and testimony of this poor man, against the inhuman and cruel conduct of the Relieving Officer, and they strike me with an awful solemnity while I record them: his *dying looks* and *dying words* are quite fresh to my mind."—*Ibid.*

"There was one woman who cut her throat. She told the Master that if he took her child from her, she would cut her throat, and he did do it, and after she left the House she carried her threat into execution, and *did cut her throat.*"—*Witness examined on the Prosecution of the Master of the Hoo Union, "Morning Herald," Jan. 7, 1841.*

"I had repeated applications to visit cases of great destitution, and I frequently found them quite neglected, and *never visited by the Relieving Officer.* I was fetched to a case, where the man was suffering from an abscess in the arm, and could not work; there were five children, the eldest of whom had been a cripple from its birth; all that they were allowed for several weeks' maintenance of seven persons, was 1s., one stone of bread, and one peck of potatoes a-week. I reported this case to the Relieving Officer, but it never was visited, nor any more relief given."—*Roworth's "Observations."*

"The coroner (Mr. Wakley) said he had seen *five persons* asleep in one bed in a workhouse at the east end of London. ....The workhouse in question was originally built to contain 300 persons only, while at the time he was speaking of, it actually contained no fewer than 1,300!"—*Coroner's inquest in the "Times," Nov. 28, 1840.*

"On Monday morning (Dec. 7), at nine o'clock, Mr. Wakley, M. P., coroner, and a jury of respectable inhabitant householders, re-assembled pursuant to adjournment, in the Board-room of the Union workhouse, Hendon, Middlesex, further to prosecute the inquiries into the circumstances attending the death of James Lisney, a pauper therein, aged 45, who, it was reported, had died through an illness produced by being confined in a damp room by order of the Board of Guardians.....From the evidence adduced it appeared, that the deceased was formerly a footman in service at Hendon, but, being out of place, and becoming greatly reduced, in March last, his goods were distrained upon for rent, and he was compelled, with his wife, and one of his children, to seek an asylum in the above

workhouse, from which he had been, for some time previous, in the receipt of out-door relief. On Tuesday, the 3d ult., he asked permission of the Master of the workhouse, in the presence of the Board of Guardians, to be allowed a holiday, when the Chairman of the Board, on being made acquainted with his request, said it could not be complied with. Deceased then remarked, that 'he did not see why he should not have a holiday the same as another person,' when he was told by the Chairman to leave the room. This he said he should not do, and the Chairman then directed that he should be placed in confinement for 24 hours for his 'impertinence,' and fed upon bread and water, which was carried into effect on the following morning by the Master locking him up in the Lodge, or receiving-ward, and keeping him there until the next (Thursday) morning. Shortly afterwards, deceased was taken ill, and coughed violently; and on the parish surgeon seeing him, that gentleman said he had caught a dreadful cold, and must take care of himself. Subsequently, on the Sunday previous to his death, his daughter, who was in service in the neighbourhood, went to see him. He was then in bed very ill, and told her in the presence of Judith Biddle, one of the nurses, the Rev. Mr. Pemberton, the chaplain, and his own wife, that he had been locked up in a damp room by order of Mr. Williams (the Chairman, and *a clergyman !*) for saying *a few words the latter did not approve of*; that he had thereby caught a severe cold, which had struck to his inside; that he had kept his bed in consequence, which he was sure he should never be able to leave again; that he had never felt warm since, and was sure he should die. His prediction proved true; for he got worse, rapidly sank, and died on Friday, the 21st of Nov."—*Poor-Law Murder reported in the "Metropolitan Conservative Journal," Dec. 12, 1840.*

"An inquiry has taken place this week at Rochester, before the county magistrates, into several charges preferred against James Miles, the Master of the Hoo Union-House, for cruelly beating several young pauper-children of both sexes. Elizabeth Danes stated, that she was 13 years of age, and that the defendant, James Miles, had punished her three times while she was in the Union-House. The offence she had committed was leav-



ing a little dirt in the corner of a room, and the defendant made her lie upon a table, and *took her clothes off*, and beat her with a rod made of a birch-broom until blood came. Another time, she was stripped and received ten severe stripes; and a third time, the Master *pulled up her clothes, and flogged her on her person*. The latter time blood came. A woman named Roberts corroborated a portion of the above evidence. The defendant fetched her to hold the little girl while he flogged her. The child cried bitterly, and the marks of the beating lasted upon her for some time. The girl's person was *cut in stripes!* Witness never saw the Matron flog the girls. Sarah Barnes, a little girl about 10 or 11 years of age, stated, that she had no father or mother. She was in the Hoo Union-House until Friday last, and she had been living with her grandmother at Grange since Saturday afternoon. She left the Union-House because she broke a piece out of a milk jug, and she was told she was to 'have the rod' the next morning. At six o'clock on Saturday morning she got up and left the Union-House.....She could not say how many times the Master had flogged her, but he flogged her on the Tuesday previous to her running away. She was also beat on the Monday for not washing a dish clean. The Master laid her on a table in the hall, and pulled up her petticoats, and beat her, until she was very much hurt with a birch rod. Upon one occasion, the Master flogged her until the blood came, and the Mistress struck her on the last Board-day with a poker upon her arm. (The child showed her arm, which was still black). She was also struck on the back with the poker, because she did not clean the stoves in the Board-room."—*Ibid.*

"The Poor-Law Commissioners were remarkable for the discoveries they had made; they had discovered that overseers of parishes were too lavish in the expenditure of their own money; and they had also made one important discovery which he would mention—that was, that if it were wished to raise a man's moral character, it was only to be done, by first ascertaining the extent of misery he endured, and then by adding a little more misery in addition. 'Give him,' said they, 'a little skilly, and then you will see his moral character!'"—*Mr. T. Clutton Salt, in the Birmingham Council, Dec. 1, 1840.*

"Upwards of half-a-dozen girls in the Hoo workhouse, some of them verging on *womanhood*, have at times had their persons exposed in the most brutal and indecent manner, by the Master, for the purpose of inflicting on them cruel floggings; and the same girls, at other times, have, in a scarcely less indecent manner, been compelled by him to strip the upper parts of their persons naked, to allow him to scourge them with birch rods on their bare shoulders and waists, and which, from more than one of the statements from the lips of the sufferers, appears to have been inflicted without mercy. One girl says, 'My back was marked with blood.' Another, a witness, who had not herself been punished, says, 'We women were called to hold one of the girls while the Master flogged her; but we went down in the yard out of the way, because we could not bear the sight; afterwards we got ointment out of the sick ward to rub her back, for it was *all cut to pieces*.' Again, 'One Sunday the Master flogged little Jemmy (a pauper's illegitimate child, then two years of age) with a birch rod, so that the *child carried the marks a month*, because it cried for its mother, who was gone to church, and for its little brother, who was that day put into breeches, and taken away from the children's ward.'"—*Rochester Correspondent to the "Times," Dec. 26, 1840.*

"On Thursday, Ann Davis appeared before the magistrates sitting at the Angel Inn, Merthyr, to crave their interposition to save herself and infant from destruction. She was in great distress, and appeared exhausted with mental and bodily affliction. It appears that the unhappy woman was the mother of a child, to which a low vagabond fellow, in the parish of Gellygaer, was father. When the child was born, she was in service in the adjoining parish of Bedwellty; as soon as she could walk, she took her infant and carried it into the parish of Gellygaer, and there left it at the dwelling of its father. For leaving the child in that manner, she was brought before the magistrates of Merthyr by the parish-officer of Gellygaer, and was committed to Cardiff gaol for a month for the offence, she observing at the time she wished it had been for a longer period, as she did not know what to do. The period of her imprisonment having expired, she was set free, and now applied to the magistrates, saying, that she had passed the previous night under a hedge with her infant,

which she did not wish to murder, but which she could not support! The father neither would or could support her or it. She would be glad to be sent to gaol to keep them from perishing. The magistrates lamented their inability to make any order in her case; all they could do was to request the parish-officers to give her a few shillings for the supply of her immediate wants. Let the hard-hearted advocates of the Bastardy Clauses of the New Poor-Law read this, and then say whether those clauses are not mercilessly cruel in their operation. Here is a poor creature compelled, in an inclement season, with a sucking babe at her breast, to pass the night under a hedge, imploring for incarceration in a gaol, as offering her an asylum from such horrors. Supposing this forlorn being had, in her desperation and misery, destroyed her babe or herself, or both, on whose head would be the fearful responsibility of the crime?"—*Merthyr Guardian*, Dec., 1840.

"I have seen an old woman named Thorp, who is dead now, led up the hall by the ears, by the Master; and he has made her walk round the line-posts in the yard when she could scarcely drag one leg after the other."—*A witness on the Prosecution of Mr. Miles, the Master of the Hoo Union, for cruelly and indecently flogging the pauper female children, reported in the "Morning Herald," Jan. 7, 1841.*

"Phillis Danes is in the House now. I saw the Master once tie her up under the Lodge, where we wash our hands, and she had a fit, and pitched down while she was so tied."—*Ibid.*

"I have seen Mr. Miles pinch Sarah Barnes's ears, and make them look 'angry,' because she did not wash the plates clean."—*Ibid.*

"Mary Paste is a great girl, 14 years of age; I saw red weals left upon her each time she was flogged. No one held her except the Master. He came and seized her by the arm while she was at breakfast. She cried bitterly, and asked me to go with her, and told me she was to be flogged. When she was punished, her chemise was off the upper part of her body, *her bosom was laid bare*, and the band of her petticoat alone kept her chemise upon her body."—*Ibid.*

"The following is the report of a trial which took place, at the Old Bailey on Tuesday last, before the Common

Sergeant. It appeared in the *Times* and in the *Herald* of Wednesday, being stated by those two papers in very nearly the same words. And we beg the reader to remark, before he proceeds to peruse this horrible detail, that the Whig press have given *no report at all* of the case: neither the *Chronicle* nor the *Globe* say one syllable about it:—

*William Hill*, a shoeing-smith, 38 years of age, was convicted of stealing a pair of clogs of the value of 2s. 6d., the property of a person of the name of Towers. It appeared from the evidence that the clogs were missed from the prosecutor's shop, and immediately afterwards were found in the possession of the prisoner. The prisoner was also found guilty on another indictment, charging him with having been previously convicted at the June sessions of a trifling offence, and sentenced to two months' hard labour.

THE COMMON SERGEANT.—Well, Sir, how is it you make your appearance here so soon?

PRISONER.—Why, my Lord, the fact is, I came out of the House of Correction in August last without a penny, and with my character blasted; and I assure you, my Lord, I have since that time travelled 800 miles in search of work, but, unfortunately, without success. Our trade has, in many parts, been entirely broken up; and the opening of the Birmingham and other railways has thrown more than 2,000 shoeing smiths out of employ.

THE COMMON SERGEANT.—But, notwithstanding you are poor, you should not resort to thieving.

PRISONER.—Oh, my Lord, hunger and starvation will drive a man to commit acts which he would otherwise scorn.

THE COMMON SERGEANT.—Then you should apply to your parish, and they will relieve you.

The prisoner shook his head.

THE COMMON SERGEANT.—Where do you belong to?

PRISONER.—I belong to Birmingham, my Lord; but it's quite useless to apply to the parish for relief under the New Poor-Law system. I am an able-bodied man, as your Lordship can easily perceive. I applied to the parish, and was told to go and look for work. I have done so, but have not been able to succeed. Really, my Lord, there are so many clauses in



the Poor-Law Amendment-Act which clash one against the other, that no person seems able to understand them. (Laughter.) It's all very well laughing, but I declare I had no food for two days, nor a bed for three nights, before I committed this offence, and I will candidly admit I did it on purpose to be taken into custody; what else could I do?

THE COMMON SERGEANT.—And I suppose you are aware you have subjected yourself to transportation?

PRISONER.—I was aware, my Lord, of what I was about. I do not expect to find transportation a bed of roses, but I must now submit to my fate. I would certainly rather leave the country than be compelled to starve in it.

THE COMMON SERGEANT.—Now, suppose the Court feels inclined to take a lenient view of your case, what would you do with yourself when you are liberated?

PRISONER.—My Lord, I really do not know. I am a good workman, and would gladly labour for 2s. per day, if I could get it.

ALDERMAN FAREBROTHER.—I think you had better go to Birmingham, and apply to the overseers there.

PRISONER.—My Lord, I have done so, but they won't relieve me.

ALDERMAN FAREBROTHER.—Then go to the workhouse and sit down, and tell them they must relieve you.

PRISONER.—Well, my Lord, if I did so they would soon show me the door, and order me to walk myself off (Laughter). I never had a farthing of parish money in my life, and before I committed this theft I sold my last shirt and waistcoat from off my back.

The police-constable who apprehended the prisoner said the statement was perfectly true.

THE COMMON SERGEANT.—It is certainly a circumstance much to be regretted that persons should be driven to crime from the want of proper relief. The Court, believing your statement to be true, will depart from its general rule, and not transport you. The sentence, therefore, is, that you be imprisoned two days and discharged; therefore, you may now go and seek employment.

PRISONER.—Pray, my Lord, may I ask whether there is not any fund from which I can obtain a few shillings to purchase me a shirt and a few necessaries to start with?

THE COMMON SERGEANT.—I am sorry

we have no such fund here, and it is much to be regretted that amongst so many charitable institutions with which the metropolis abounds, there is not one where, in proper and deserving cases, relief can be afforded to discharged prisoners.

ALDERMAN FAREBROTHER, having consulted with the governor of the prison, intimated to the poor fellow that he might inquire at the gaol whether anything was left for him.

He then left the dock, apparently with great gratitude.

Here is a man twice found guilty of felony in the course of a few months; no doubt about the facts any more than the crime: here is a criminal whom the judge might have *transported for life*, and we find the judge giving him the nominal punishment of *two days' imprisonment*! And this, simply because the idea of treating the poor creature as a criminal, was revolting to all sense of justice. Well may the Whigs make a struggle to get rid of trial by jury, and so prevent the exposure of such cases. *We cannot undertake to say that any such case as the above ever occurred. But it looks very much like truth, because, while the Whig papers never even mention the man's name in their columns, they give the report in the other papers a complete go-by. If such a trial did not take place, is it likely that the Chronicle and its allies would have neglected to attack the publishers of the false report? A transportable felon sent forth from the dock to 'go and seek employment!' Since the above was written we have heard that sums of money have been sent to the Magistrates anonymously for this poor fellow.*—*Champion*, Dec. 2, 1838.

“On Monday afternoon an inquest, which had been adjourned from Friday, was resumed, at the Plough Inn, Clapham, to inquire into the circumstances of the death of Mary Stonard, aged 61 years, who is stated to have died from sheer destitution.—Alfred Bridges, a police-constable, 30, V division, deposed that on the preceding Thursday, a young man came to the station-house and informed him that there was a woman in the tap-

room of the Plough (the above house) dying. Witness immediately hastened there, and found the deceased supported by some persons, but she was dead. He took charge of the body, and, after the doctor had seen it, searched it, and found twenty-two duplicates for property pledged with pawnbrokers; two or three pieces of coke, and a snuff-box, were also found in her pockets.—Mary Ann Stonard, the daughter-in-law of the deceased, stated, that the deceased lived upon Putney-common. Her husband is a gardener, but unable to work from infirmity, being as old as the deceased, and very lame. They had received slight relief from Putney parish, but not sufficient for them to exist upon. On Thursday the deceased was going before the Guardians of the Clapham Union, and upon leaving witness in the morning, she said, ‘If I don’t get relief, I and my husband must starve.’ The witness added that she knew deceased had had very little to eat lately. She had nearly five miles to walk from Putney-common to Clapham. She was a very sober woman, and had formerly been well off.—George Gill, waiter at the Plough, stated that the deceased came into the tap-room between twelve and one o’clock, in company with another elderly woman. The woman who was with her called for a pint of porter, but deceased scarcely tasted it. The deceased appeared very cold, and, about five minutes after she came, fell from her seat, and in a very short time, expired.—Charles Hughes deposed that he was in the room of the Plough when the two women came in. Witness was having his dinner, and the woman who was with the deceased asked him if ‘he had done with his potato-peelings?’ She was eating them when the deceased fell from the form.—Juror: Who paid for the beer?—Witness: The deceased put down a halfpenny, and said that was all she had.—Mr. D. Greenwood, of Clapham, surgeon, stated that he had examined the body of the deceased, and had found the brain, the heart, the liver, the lungs, and other intestines, in a healthy state; the stomach was contracted and altogether destitute of food; indeed, the only thing it contained was about a quarter-of-an-ounce of gastric juice; the smaller intestines were also contracted and empty, but in some degree distended with *flatus*. He was decidedly of opinion that the deceased died from exhaustion, caused by the intensity of the cold weather, fatigue, and the want of food. The body alto-

gether had a wasted and emaciated appearance. Several other witnesses were examined, from whose evidence it appeared that the deceased and her husband were industrious people, but were reduced to the last stage of destitution, and that the deceased had repeatedly applied to the parish-officers of Putney, without obtaining relief.—Mr. Unwin, the Relieving Officer of the Putney, Wandsworth, and Clapham Union, gave evidence to show that he had used every diligence in answering all demands made to him for relief.—Some conversation took place between the relatives of the deceased and this witness, after which the jury returned the following verdict:—‘That the deceased, being very lightly clad, perished from exhaustion, extreme cold, and want of nutritious food.’—*Sunday Times*, Jan. 21, 1838.

“The horrible inhumanity and disgusting heartlessness which, in these days of pauper-starving, cold-blooded political economy, characterize those who are appointed to minister to the immediate wants of the destitute, were strikingly developed at Marlborough-street, on Tuesday, by Bryant, the Relieving Officer of St. James’s. A young man, named Addison, dreadfully afflicted, with his left arm and leg crooked and withered, crawled into the office on that day to relate a tale of horrible privation and suffering. He stated that he had come up from Liverpool in search of employment—that he had been unsuccessful—had spent what little money he had, and had been compelled to walk in the streets during several nights, notwithstanding his dreadful bodily infirmities. Mr. Conant, on ascertaining that, in addition to his being found destitute in the parish of St. James’s, he had slept there one night, sent for Bryant, the Relieving Overseer, who, on making his appearance, with the most revolting heartlessness, observed, ‘He (the wretched outcast) says he has been walking about the streets several nights. He must, therefore, have committed a number of acts of vagrancy. What were the police about that they did not take him into custody and have him punished?’ Ay, why did they not have him ‘punished?’ Why was he not sent to the treadmill for a month! ‘I am aware,’ said Mr. Conant, ‘that I have no power to make an order on the parish. I only put the case on the ground of humanity. Here is a young man evidently brought up in a respectable station, afflicted so dreadfully by a para-



lytic stroke that his leg and arm are withered up, obliged to walk about the streets, according to his own statement, nearly exhausted from starvation.' 'But,' exclaimed Bryant, 'his story is incredible. How could such a cripple suppose he would obtain a situation in London? I wish to have him sworn to the truth of what he has stated.' The young man immediately took the oath, and proceeded to draw a most horrible picture of misery and misfortunes. The humane Overseer, however, still declared his story to be incredible, and called him again contemptuously a cripple and a fool, on which the wretched creature burst into tears, and again solemnly declared that all he stated was correct. 'It is true,' he said, 'that I am a cripple, and miserably poor; but my character is unblemished.' Eventually Mr. Conant humanely consented to pay half the expense of sending the poor creature to Liverpool, and the parties left the office; but what a dreadful exemplification does this case afford, not only of the working of our anti-Christian Poor-Laws, but of the horrible and disgusting heartlessness by which its ministers, in the aggregate, are characterized."—*Weekly Dispatch*, Nov. 18, 1838.

"QUEEN-SQUARE.—A lad, not more than twelve years of age, was charged by policeman Dawney, of the B division, with an offence which has been frequently considered at this office as of a most dreadful nature, that of being found sleeping in the open air. The policeman stated, that the lad crouched himself under the portico of St. George's hospital, but this situation afforded him very little protection from the rain, which at this time was falling in torrents, and upon the prisoner not being able to give an account of himself he took him to the station-house. The boy, who shivered with cold when placed before the Magistrates, said that his name was George Fisher. He was born at Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire. He did not recollect his mother, but he knew very well that his father had been transported. Mr. Gregorie—'For what offence was he transported?' The boy burst into tears, and said for breaking machinery in Buckinghamshire. Since his father had been transported he had not had a friend in the world. He was willing to do all he could for himself, and had come up to London to seek for work. Mr. Gregorie—'Before you left Buckinghamshire, how did you live?' The lad replied—'As well as I could. I did jobs; and sometimes slept

in the manger and sometimes in the yard. Nobody cared about me.' Mr. Gregorie—'Did you apply to the overseers of the Union workhouse?' 'I did, but I could get no relief.' Mr. Gregorie—'To whom did you apply?' 'I went to Hobbs, a publican, at Woburn-green; he is one of the overseers; but before I went there they told me if I hadn't friends it was of no use, and I found it was true, for they would not give me a halfpenny, and so I came by Mr. Jolly's waggon to London.' Mr. Gregorie—'Did you apply to the Guardians of the Poor?' 'I did not, for I was left without friends, and nobody helped me.' The policeman, Dawney, said that he was himself born in Buckinghamshire, and having only lately joined the 'Force,' he knew, and could swear, that the overseers in that part of the country would not allow a destitute man or woman to be introduced to the Guardians, no matter as to the business they might have with them. Mr. Gregorie ordered the poor lad to receive immediate relief, and that a few shillings should be given to him from the poor-box. He would himself take care that he should be sent back to his parish, and directed the clerk to write to the Union workhouse authorities, in order that he might receive the relief due to him."—*Weekly Dispatch*, Jan. 6, 1839.

"On Tuesday a poor woman, named Dunne, who had two young children with her, applied, under the following circumstances, to Mr. Codd, the sitting Magistrate:—She stated, that the father of these poor children, who was her brother-in-law, died last Thursday in his wretched lodgings in Rose-lane, Spitalfields. While able he had been in the habit of selling things in the street. During his last illness he had received some attendance from the parish doctor; but the applicant said that he had no such attendance for three days preceding his death, and his body had since been lying naked in the room, as no coffin could be procured to put it in, and had now become swollen, as if on the point of bursting. These poor children had been left in the place, which was visited occasionally, and they were almost perishing of neglect and want. The applicant herself, who was exceedingly poor, came twice a-day from Blackfriars'-road. She was unable to provide for the children herself, but had applied repeatedly, but in vain, to the parish-officers. From the workhouse she was sent to the house of Almond, the Relieving Overseer, but at his

place the door had been shut in her face; and on Monday, when she last called, Mrs. Almond told her that he was then before the Committee of the Union. (This statement caused some surprise, for Almond, instead of being in attendance upon the parochial Committee on Monday, was at this office with a broken head and black eye, and charged with being drunk and behaving outrageously at a public-house at two o'clock on Sunday morning.)—Mr. Codd expressed in strong terms his feelings at the facts which the poor woman had related. He immediately caused some soup and other nourishment to be supplied to the woman and children, which the poor little creatures devoured with avidity, and he then sent Grove, the officer, with a message, which caused them immediately to be received into the workhouse, and measures to be taken with respect to the other facts which had been stated.”—*Sunday Times*, Jan. 14, 1838.

“He was a short time ago called upon to attend in his official capacity at the Isleworth workhouse, to hold an inquest on a child who had died there. It had been taken to Ealing to be buried. The mother, on arriving there (and she had to run all the way almost to get there in time, the funeral having started without her having been informed), was told that the child could not be taken into the Church, because it had died of the small-pox. She said no, it was not so; she was an inmate of the workhouse too, and it was no such thing. The clergyman, on finding this discrepancy between the statements of the mother and the workhouse authorities, sent back the funeral, and wrote to him (Mr. Wakley); stating the facts, and requesting him to inquire into the case. He had accordingly issued his precept for an inquest, on which it was proved that the mother had been shortly before received, with her child, into the workhouse, the latter being about a year old. Soon afterwards the surgeon said it must be weaned, as it was a year old. It was weaned, and taken from her on Tuesday. Well, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday passed, the mother having inquired after it on Wednesday and Saturday. On Monday she paid it a visit at the house. She was shown a number of children, and on looking at her own child, it was so changed she could not recognize it. Well, she went down to the Governor, and asked for an order to go, ‘for,’ said she, ‘it is impossible that my child should live here.’

The man said he would give her an order for the doctor. Shortly after, he arrived, and administered some medicine, a powder, or something of the sort. That was on the Monday. The child lingered from the Wednesday to the Sunday, when, at nine o'clock it was seized with convulsions, and at a quarter-to-eleven it was dead. The nurse informed the Governor of this circumstance, and on being asked whether she had informed the mother of the child, ‘No, Sir,’ was her answer, ‘I have nothing to do with the mother.’ In reply to another question, she said that she did not in any shape consider it her duty to acquaint the mother. The mothers were not allowed to attend their children in the workhouse. In this case the mother resided in the same house with the deceased child. She casually entered during breakfast the next morning, and it was stated at the inquest, and not denied by the authorities, all of whom were present, that one of the women present pointed at her with her finger and said, ‘Do you not know what has happened to your child? Why the child is dead.’ She rushed from the room, and found that it was the fact.”—*Mr. Wakley's Speech, House of Commons*, March 19, 1841.

“HATTON-GARDEN.—On Saturday, Harriet Longley, a handsome young woman, aged 20, was charged with the wilful murder of her child, an infant three weeks old. Sergeant King, of the N division of police, stated, that the prisoner came to him on the previous evening, and gave herself up on the charge of murdering her child, and taking him to the New River, opposite to Owen's-row, pointed out where the body was found. The unhappy woman gave the following heart-rending account of her sufferings:—Some weeks before her confinement she was committed to gaol on the charge of being destitute; she was confined there, and she and her child, a fortnight after her accouchement, were sent from the prison without a home to shelter them, or a mouthful to eat. She wandered about, maddened by starvation, and implored assistance at various workhouses, but was refused relief at all, the Marylebone workhouse being the last. From fatigue and starvation combined, her milk dried up, and as she sat before the water the piercing cries of her helpless infant for food reduced her to that state of frenzy that she plunged it into the water to put an end to its agonies. The surgeon who examined the wasted body of the infant



said it was quite dead when taken out of the water. Mr. Combe said, it was the most awfully-distressing case he had ever heard of; he must remand the miserable woman for a week, when it would be his painful duty to commit her for trial to Newgate."—*Times*, March 22, 1841.

"ANOTHER POOR-LAW MURDER.—On Thursday, an inquest was held at the King and Keys public-house, Clerkenwell-close, Clerkenwell-green, upon the body of Thomas Stratton, aged 36, who came by his death under the following melancholy and distressing circumstances. The jury proceeded to the vaults under Clerkenwell church to view the body, which presented a miserable spectacle. It was quite emaciated, and in every respect indicated that the deceased had died through want of the common necessities of life. On their return to the jury-room, James Locke, policeman, No. 179, G division, residing at No. 30, St. Helena-place, Clerkenwell, being sworn, stated, that on Monday night last, he saw the deceased sitting by the side of a doorway in Gray's-inn-lane, and two men, who appeared to be strangers, were supporting him. Witness spoke to him, and he appeared to be very weak, and he begged of him (witness) to suffer him to remain there for a short time, and he would be able to walk away. Witness left him, and returned in about ten minutes, when he found him gone, but he afterwards discovered him near the Holborn end of Gray's-inn-lane, scarcely able to walk. Witness asked him what parish he belonged to. He replied, St. Sepulchre's parish, and that he had applied there that morning, and they told him that they would have nothing at all to do with him. Witness said, 'I had better take you to the station-house,' and he consented to go there, when he with difficulty walked to the bottom of Eyre-street-hill, Coldbath-square, but he could proceed no farther, and witness sent for a stretcher, and he was carried to Rosamond-street station-house, where he was entered on the charge sheet as being drunk. Juror—"Did he appear sober?" Witness—"I don't know." Coroner—"Or rather, was he ill, and not in liquor?" Witness—"I think he was ill; and conceiving that he was in distress, I gave him twopence to procure some bread and coffee." The Coroner asked witness why he signed the charge sheet, when he had doubts whether the deceased was drunk? He replied, that it was usual to do so. The Inspector

of the G division also acknowledged that he did not read the charge before he signed it. Sergeant Barton, G 1, being sworn, stated, that the deceased was brought to the station-house at a quarter-before-seven o'clock on Monday evening last. He appeared to be drunk. He smelt of liquor decidedly. He did not appear to be in ill health. He could speak. The last witness said that he was drunk or ill. Witness set down the charge, and Locke signed it. Coroner—"It is too bad that a poor creature lying ill in the street should be taken and locked up, when he ought to be provided with assistance and a bed." Barton added, that on searching him after death, a card was found, showing that he was an out-patient of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, under Dr. Farr; several pills, 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., two combs, some needles, and some papers, also a bag containing some groundsel for birds, &c. The jury examined the papers, one of which was the frontispiece of the play of *The Old Bachelor*, act iv., scene 6, on the back of which was written, in masterly style, the following:—"If I die of starvation or want, I do lay my death to Mr. Miller and the Guardians of St. Sepulchre's parish." Another printed tract was found, headed, *Thoughts on Eternity*; and went on to state, 'Whether you are old, or whether you are young, whether you are decaying with sickness, or whether you are in blooming health and vigour, every moment brings you nearer to eternity. Eternity! well weigh that word, and compare how matters stand between God and your soul. You are a sinner by nature, a sinner by practice, guilty and undone for ever, unless Jesus deliver you by giving you faith in his precious blood and righteousness. Have you received him? Does his 'Spirit dwell in you?' Have you redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of your sins? Has he "clothed you with the robe of righteousness?" &c. Here was written in pencil,—'Oh, God! would I were at rest with thee, and out of the troubles of this hardhearted world.' Thomas Stratton."—Sergeant Barton added, that the deceased said he slept the night before in Maiden-lane, but not on a bed. At a quarter-past-two on Tuesday morning, Ginger, 137, informed witness that he was dead, and he found him lying on the floor. He sent for a doctor, but he had been dead half-an-hour. The body was removed to the vaults of Clerkenwell church. The Coroner said, it was evident that the deceased's mind and circumstances were in a miserable condition; and,

judging from the groundsel and other articles produced, he had been striving for a wretched subsistence through industry. He inquired whether the jury wished Mr. Miller to be sent for. The jury concurred that his attendance was necessary, and Mountstevens, the beadle, was despatched to St. Sepulchre's workhouse, to bring him forward. Juror—'The deceased, I have no doubt, was starved to death; he is a complete skeleton.' Another Juror—'I did think when the New Poor-Law Bill was about to be introduced, that the Government would have provided for such miserable beings as the deceased, and not allow them to die in the streets; or that something would be done to afford them immediate relief, but they are pushed from one place to another until they die.' Mr. Miller here entered the room, and being sworn, he gave his name Samuel Miller, No. 68, Wynyatt-street, Clerkenwell, and proceeded to view the body of the deceased. Juror—'Pray, Sir, what are you?' Mr. Miller—'Relieving Officer to the West-end Union, St. Sepulchre's parish.' Juror—'Do you know the deceased, Thomas Stratton?'—Mr. Miller—'I recollect him.' Juror (handing the paper on which the writing with his name appeared)—'Do you know anything of that paper?' Mr. Miller (reading it)—'No, but I am quite free from that.' He stated that about a month ago the deceased called on him, and said he belonged to the parish, and he had been warehouseman to Messrs. Brownings, oil-merchants, of St. John's-street. He gave him some bread, and he went before the Guardians, who thought he was young and able enough to maintain himself. Witness sent to Messrs. Brownings, who said they did not recollect him.' Juror—'We have it in evidence that the deceased said he applied to the parish on Monday morning last; is that the fact?' Mr. Miller—'It is not; at least he did not apply to me.' The Coroner said that when the policeman found him, he conducted himself in a rational and discreet way, and did not speak as a drunken man would do. He went on until he was able to go no farther; and there was no pretence to charge him with drunkenness. It was for the jury to decide, and he had no doubt but they would arrive at a proper verdict. The jury consulted about three minutes, when the foreman said, 'Our verdict is, that the deceased died a natural death through starvation.' Several of the jury—'No, no; starvation alone is our verdict.'

Juror—'It cannot be a natural death, if a man be starved to death.' Mr. Bell—'Then your foreman returns one verdict, and you another.' Jury—'No; we all agree to starvation. It is unnatural for a man to starve.' Foreman—'I misunderstood; it was my mistake.' The whole of the jury then agreed that the deceased died through want of the common necessities of life.'—*Northern Star*, July 28, 1838.

"I have just received a letter from my friend J. Perceval, Esq., son of the late Right Hon. Spencer Perceval. He has been on an Anti-Poor-Law excursion. I will give you a short extract from his letter, because I think your readers will be gratified to find that he is still busily labouring in the field of humanity. I have many other letters from the agricultural districts, informing me how dissatisfied the labourers are, and how much the gentry are deceiving themselves. If there were a northern movement just now, (I mean southward), *oh, what an England we should have!* We should have no petitioning, but we should have what Lord Howick seems to think of more value. Mr. Perceval says—'I called at Sevenoaks on a solicitor, a bootmaker, and a brewer. The conversation was *decided and strong* AGAINST the principle and operations of the New Poor-Law. The solicitor, an old gentleman, said "There is a person who was formerly the landlord of the Black Boy; he and I were old friends, but he is now obliged to come upon the parish. He often used to show me favours, and I returned them; *now*, if I go down to the workhouse, I may not bring him *even an apple*; and what is worse, *I cannot speak to him, except in presence of his master!!* I call that very hard.' And so do I. *It is hard!*—it is unjust!—it is unnecessary cruelty!—it is shutting up the bowels of mercy!—it is the death-blow to charity!—it is the grave of Christianity! But, Gentlemen, *it shall not be endured much longer.*' Mr. Perceval proceeds—'The brewer is a Guardian of the new Union; he has a servant whose father was ill in the workhouse. This man applied to his master for an order to go and see his sick father. His master, who was going out, had not time to write an order but told the servant 'to go down to the workhouse, and use his name, and that, no doubt, he would be admitted.' The man went down, and was refused admittance to see his sick father!! though he assured



the master of the workhouse, *that he had his own master's leave to do so !!* (his own master was a Guardian of the Union.) THE NEXT DAY WHEN HE WENT DOWN TO THE WORKHOUSE PROVIDED WITH AN ORDER, HIS POOR FATHER WAS NO MORE.' I dare not publish Mr. Perceval's remarks on this case of horrible devilism. He is horror-struck, and he expresses himself so strongly that I dare not copy him. But, Gentlemen, let me ask, why all this unnecessary severity? Why this unheard-of cruelty? Is *poverty* now really worse than *murder*? Had that *pauper* been a convicted MURDERER *he would have been allowed to have seen his son the day BEFORE his EXECUTION.* O horrible! horrible! Brougham, that law is thine! some day thou shalt answer for it! Gentlemen, if this be all the comfort which the Queen can afford to her poor subjects, let her be crowned in sackcloth, kneeling upon ashes! or rather, let her refuse a crown which can only confer disgrace on a female and a Christian, and let the demon-damned, the execrable monster, 'under whose rules and regulations' these enormities are practised; let them be crowned in iron by Satan, (Lord Brougham acting as his proxy, as he did at the begetting of this monster!!) and then let the people of England have at them!! and restore to Victoria the unsullied 'uncommissioned' crown of her ancestors!"—*Oastler's Letter to the Editor of the "Northern Star,"* April 28, 1838.

"On Wednesday evening, an inquisition, which did not terminate until a late hour, was taken before Mr. Higgs, and a most respectable jury, in the board-room of St. George's Hospital, Hyde-park-corner, on view of the body of Elizabeth Monday, aged 76 years, whose death was occasioned under the following circumstances:—William Chilton, one of the constables of Hanwell, deposed that on the morning of Monday, the 25th of June, he was called up about a quarter-before-one o'clock by Thomas Spillman, one of the mounted patrols stationed in that village, who told him that a woman who had been run over was lying at the bottom of Hanwell-hill. Witness immediately got up and went to the spot, where he found the deceased lying on the footpath, in the care of Spillman, who told witness that his fellow-constable, Denton, had gone after a coach, which was supposed to have inflicted the injury. Witness instantly

went for Dr. Haffenden, who promptly attended the deceased, and recommended her being conveyed to that hospital. Deceased was sensible, but had evidently been drinking. She said she belonged to Stoke Poges, and had been in the workhouse of that Union (Slough). On the day previous she had been with a parcel to Uxbridge, for carrying which she was to have 2s., and being tired had sat down at the side of the road, and having fallen asleep did not know whether it was a cart or coach which had passed over her legs. Witness then went to the house of Mr. Ladley, one of the overseers of Hanwell, and rang the bell for the purpose of inquiring what he was to do with the unfortunate woman. On Mr. Ladley's opening the window, he told him that her leg was broken, and that she was lying on the side of the road, and asked him what he was to do with her, or where he was to take her to, the workhouse being some miles distant, to which his answer was, that he should not take her up, nor did he care who did. He then shut the window, and went to bed, and witness, on his own responsibility, procured a cart, in which he conveyed the deceased to that hospital. From subsequent evidence given by this and other witnesses, it appeared that the poor woman had been run over by the wheel of a coach belonging to a Mr. Follitt, of Uxbridge, the driver of which was drunk. The jury having animadverted most strongly on the conduct of the driver, and of Mr. Ladley, returned the following verdict—'Accidental death, through the negligence of James Bond, the driver of William Follitt's coach, with a deodand of £5 on the coach, and the jury cannot sufficiently express their feelings of disgust at the illegal and inhuman conduct of the overseer of Hanwell, when solicited by the parish constable to afford a conveyance for the unfortunate deceased.' The Coroner said the overseer was bound by the New Poor-Law to have done so, it being a case of 'urgent necessity.' There is a clause in the New Poor-Law which authorizes the Poor-Law Commissioners to dismiss any paid officer of any workhouse establishment whenever they please. Will the Bashaws dismiss the heartless villain Ladley, for his share in the murder of this poor woman? We guess not. Then are the 'cool-headed,' 'steady tempered' devils best fit for doing their horrible behests?"—*Northern Star*, July 28, 1838.

"We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,  
Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth;  
Contemptuous of all honourable rule,  
Yet bartering freedom and the poor man's life  
For gold, as at a market!"—COLERIDGE'S SIBYLLINE LEAVES.

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"INHUMANITY OF THE WHIG POOR-LAW.—The case of John Berry, which was mentioned by Lord Wharnccliffe, in the House of Lords, has created some interest. This poor creature is bordering on *ninety* years of age. Under the old Poor-Law he had been in the habit of receiving from his parish 2s. a-week, and an allowance of four guineas a-year to pay his lodgings. But no sooner had the Workshop Guardians begun to exercise their calling, than this aged pilgrim became the especial object of their tender mercies. All he had in the world to subsist upon was £9 8s. per annum. In the course of nature it was impossible that he could survive above a year or two—nay, the presumption was that he would drop much sooner. Considering, therefore, that his parochial pittance was manifestly insufficient to keep soul and body together; considering that even that pittance had been cheerfully awarded him by those unwealthy rate-payers whose pockets bore the burden of it; considering that the helplessness and infirmity of extreme old age always require a proportionably increased outlay for coals, flannels, washing, diet, and attendance; above all, considering that the administration of pauper funds had latterly been transferred from parsimonious shopkeepers to bountiful dukes and 'squires—everybody expected that the declining days of poor old Berry would be bettered rather than embittered by the introduction of the Whig law. The Workshop Board, however, at whose head is the Duke of Portland, as Chairman, and at whose tail is Mr. Whall, as clerk, happened to be seized with rather a violent turn for sharp and searching reforms. A Mr. Wright, in particular, who, if he do not possess what Mr. Wyndham wittily termed 'a capital face for a grievance,' has at least an exquisite nose for abuses, was pleased to signalize his guardianship by a special concern for Berry's independence and comfort. That such a venerable patriarch should be reduced to the humiliation of depending upon charity; that he should be subjected to the pain of having a lodging provided for him at the expense

of the Poor-rates; and that he should be exempted from the honour and luxury of being cast upon his pennyless kinsfolk for support; all this, in the humane eye of Mr. Wright, appeared to be indefensible. Accordingly, this same Mr. Wright reports to his fellow-guardians that Berry's relations are perfectly able to provide for him; and by these notable Guardians, the four guineas a-year, which that weary pilgrim had heretofore received from his parish to pay his rent, was suddenly withdrawn, by which circumstance the aged pauper was plunged into the utmost distress, and his very bed was sold from beneath him. On this transaction getting wind, public indignation rose to an extreme height; it was afterwards commented on in the House of Lords. An attempt was made, as usual, to throw a doubt upon some of its details, and the affair was allowed to stand over for further inquiry. Meanwhile, the whole Board of Guardians, having, from head to tail, become heartily ashamed of themselves, quietly raised John Berry's allowance from 2s. to 5s. a-week—thus palpably declaring (notwithstanding the convenient distinction which they now set up between the *former ability* of Berry's relatives to maintain him, and their *more recent incapacity* to do so), that if their tardy restoration of his allowance has been justly merited, their original suspension of it must have been absolutely brutal. Such was the position of this affair until Thursday, the 11th instant, when Lord Wharnccliffe, recurring to the notice previously taken of it in the House of Peers, mentioned to their Lordships that he had made inquiries upon the subject, from which it appeared, as Lord Wharnccliffe testified, that Berry actually *had* been treated with indefensible harshness. The case of John Berry, in spite of all attempts to explain it away, not only remains as an indelible blot upon the *system* which had nearly persecuted him to death, but addresses such a significant appeal to our legislators on the subject of out-door relief as may be expected to weigh with them very materially in remodelling the obnoxious act



which, in part at least, is now submitted to their review.”—*Dispatch*, August 4, 1839.

“AFFECTING TALE OF WO.—The following tale is a melancholy illustration of the working of the accursed Poor-Law Act:—A coroner’s inquest was held on Monday, at Angmering, Sussex, on view of the body of Thomas Pentlow, who hanged himself under the following heart-rending circumstances:—Eliza Pentlow, wife of the unfortunate man, being sworn, deposed,—‘I have been married to him eight years and upwards. He is 32 years of age. I have had two children by my husband, and shall soon be confined with a third. He belonged to the parish of Clapham, and has been of late working for that parish in the gravel-pits. He has lately been in the infirmary at Chichester, and returned from it the Wednesday after Christmas-day, since which time he has been at work in the gravel-pits. My husband was in the infirmary three weeks. During his absence I received from the parish of Clapham 5s. a-week for the support of myself and my two children, during which time, from my present state, I was not able to do anything for the support of my family. Since my husband’s return he has received from Mr. Wyatt, the Guardian of Clapham parish, for the first week’s work 6s., for the second 8s., and for the third 6s. My husband worked by task; he dug gravel by task, at 1s. per load, and drew money from Mr. Wyatt on account. The loads have not been counted for the three weeks, and my husband told me Mr. Wyatt refused to do it. The wages my husband received have not been sufficient to find us in food, and have only been able to procure us one bairn for three days’ burning. Last Wednesday week my husband pledged his hat and a silk handkerchief, to enable him to purchase three bushels of coals, served out by the Duke of Norfolk to the parishioners of Clapham at 6d. per bushel. Last Saturday week my husband pawned his watch for 3s. 6d., and last Thursday he pawned one blanket for 2s. 2d., both to enable us to purchase food. On Thursday, previous to his pawning the blanket, he went to Clapham after money, and when he returned he said Mr. Wyatt was not at home, but Mrs. Wyatt was; and he sent in by the housekeeper that he wanted some money on account of his work, for he had nothing to eat. The answer he received was, that they had no change,

and should have none before Friday; and unless my husband had pawned that blanket, we should have had nothing for ourselves or children to eat. On Friday my husband went again, and when he returned he told me neither Mr. nor Mrs. Wyatt was at home, and that the housekeeper told him there was no change, and she could not pay him till Mr. Wyatt came home. The last money he received from Mr. Wyatt was Saturday week (6s.). On Friday my husband told me he thought he had dug, in the three weeks, as many as 45 loads, for which my husband had only received 20s. for wages, and 1s. for repairing tools. When my husband came home on Saturday week, he told me Mr. Wyatt would drive him to do things he should never otherwise think of, by giving him such low wages. When my husband came home, on Friday last, from Mr. Wyatt’s, he was very low, and said but little. We had then only a small piece of butter in the house, and no bread or any other food. We had neither tea nor beer to drink. My husband went to Mr. Smith, who was kind enough to trust him with a loaf, or we should have had nothing to eat. On Friday, about half-past seven, I left our cottage, and went into my next door neighbour’s, to dress a boy’s bad heel. My husband at the time was leaning, with his arms folded, on the window-sill. I was gone about a quarter-of-an-hour. When I returned, my husband was not in the kitchen: I supposed he had gone to bed, or gone into the garden. One of the children, who was in bed, called me, and I went to the stairs to go up. I had no light, but found my husband’s legs, as I went up stairs, resting on my shoulders. I at the moment did not know what was the cause. I returned and procured a light, and then saw he was hanging. I ran and called my neighbour, Strow Herbert. My husband and I never had a quarrel nor an angry word since he returned from the infirmary, and, with the exception of his lowness of spirits, and not being able to get sufficient food, we have been very comfortable together. During the night, before he committed the act, my husband did not sleep, and was restless; and he got out twice, and sat by the side of the bed in a melancholy manner, and I had great difficulty in persuading him to return into bed. Nothing but the distress he has been in, not having the means of getting his wages to support his family, has caused him to destroy himself. We have

never had anything but bread and cheese or butter, with a few potatoes, except 1lb. of bacon, for three weeks. Our drink was either a little tea, or some scraped burnt bread mixed with water, as coffee is mixed.' Strow Herbert, of Angmering, labourer, next door neighbour to deceased, said he was called in, and found deceased hanging. He was quite dead, and witness cut him down. Edward Mills gave similar testimony. Verdict, 'Temporary insanity, produced by deceased not being able to procure wages due to him, the said Thomas Pentlow, by reason whereof he could not obtain food for the support of himself and family, who were in a state of destitution.'—*Weekly Dispatch*, Feb. 18, 1838.

"A specimen of brutal Poor-Law barbarity has just come under our notice. A poor man, deeply afflicted and in distress, named Matthew Horwood, a painter by trade, and who, through misfortune, had parted with almost every necessary he possessed, with the view of supporting himself, reluctantly consented to his wife's applying to Bestow, the well-paid overseer of Bethnal-green, for relief. This official sent Stokes, one of the Watch and Lamp Trust Beadles, to visit Horwood, at his wretched abode in Warner-place, Hackney-road. Stokes found the poor fellow in a miserable state of destitution, and ordered him into the Bastile, but refused any relief whatever. A few days afterwards the parish doctor's assistant, a mere lad, called on poor Horwood, and directed a blister to be applied to his neck. Three days more expired without relief being afforded, and Mrs. Horwood appeared before the Board of Guardians, who, on the report of Stokes, ordered her husband into the parish workhouse. Mrs. Horwood urged that she had so long lived with her partner that she was sure he could not bear the pangs which a separation from her would cause. Thus the matter stood, and no further notice was taken of the case until the 19th ult., when the parish doctor himself visited the patient, and expressed his regret at finding him in such bad health. He then wrote a letter to Bestow, desiring that immediate relief should be given to the poor man, who, in consequence of his miserable state, and when removal to the Union was mentioned to him, laboured under great nervous excitement. The doctor's letter was treated contemptuously. No notice whatever was taken of it. At this stage of the affair Mr. Heill, a baker,

in Bethnal-green-road, who heard of the destitute situation of Horwood, wrote a very feeling and manly letter to Mr. Shevill, one of the Guardians, who, on the receipt of the communication, promptly visited the suffering man. He found him stretched out, almost speechless, on a few dirty rags, and covered with an old garden-mat! This gentleman immediately contributed to his wants, and Mr. Heill promised to render assistance until the Board of Guardians assembled. On the 25th ult. Mr. Shevill stated the case, and insisted on Bestow producing the letter he had received from the surgeon. After some hesitation it was exhibited; and the Board feeling indignant that so much heartlessness had been shown in the case, ordered blankets and proper necessities to be sent to Horwood. This unfeeling conduct on the part of an officer occurred in a parish where nearly twenty thousand pounds a-year are collected for the maintenance of the poor, out of which sum fifteen hundred pounds are annually paid to servants interested in their management! Notwithstanding all this, a suffering, distressed fellow-creature is grossly and inhumanly neglected for a period of seventeen days, with this exception, that to cure him of his troubles, and to feed his hungry belly, a blister was applied to his neck! What are the Bashaws about to suffer so much brutality? Have they no bowels of compassion for the poor? This indeed is a sample of the working of the Poor-Law Bill, which is a thorough disgrace to a civilized country."—*Weekly Dispatch*, Dec. 2, 1838.

"CRUELTY OF THE NEW POOR-LAW. —At the Chelsea Petty Sessions on Thursday, after the disposal of some minor cases, which contained no feature of any public interest, and just as the chairman was about to quit his seat on the bench, a wretched-looking, half-famished female crawled into Court. She was followed by her daughter, a little girl of about two years old. The applicant, on being questioned, stated as follows:— 'Before I was seized with the fever, from the effects of which I am now suffering, I was in the habit of going out charing and assisting the domestics of gentlemen's houses in their work; and I also used to do many other little jobs, which enabled me to live, and support my child decently. I have been of late living in Maidenhead and Castle-yard, near the Jews'-row, by the Royal Hospital College. The mistress of the last hovel that I slept



in turned me out on learning that I had a fever, lest the other inmates of the place might catch the infection.' Chairman—'Have you had any relief from this parish?' Applicant—'I applied to Mr. Newsom, one of the relieving officers of the Kensington Union, and he quite abused me, and said that I was so troublesome he would send me to the workhouse. This morning he gave me a ticket for some bread, but in my present weak state I cannot eat bread.' The Chairman (addressing the overseers)—'Gentlemen, I think this woman should be taken into the workhouse, in order that she may receive proper assistance. Her condition is truly pitiable.' Mr. Brett (overseer)—'We shall incur a penalty of £20, under our Local Act, if we take in any pauper to the workhouse afflicted with a contagious malady, particularly a fever. I shall do everything in my power to relieve the applicant, although she is not a parishioner.' Mr. W. Cornell (the vestry clerk)—'If the parochial authorities wish to pass the applicant to Ireland, none of the vessels will receive her if the owners are acquainted that she has an infectious fever. I am not aware that there is any clause in the Local Act of Chelsea, whereby the overseers incur a penalty of £20 for admitting a pauper with a fever into the establishment.' Chairman—'Mr. Wilson, can you give the Bench any information respecting the applicant?' Mr. Wilson—'Yes, Sir, I can. The unfortunate creature is literally dying from starvation; and, if immediate relief be not afforded her, I will not answer for the consequence. Her condition is of the most horrible character. She has not the slightest support; not the common necessities of life. She has not even a blanket, or any other bed-furniture, to cover her or her infant.' The Chairman here expressed his inability, under the New Poor-Law Act, to order the applicant to be admitted into the workhouse, in consequence of her not being a parishioner. Mr. S. Cornell thought the Bench had the power, and referred the Chairman to the 54th section of the statute. The Chairman, after perusing the clause, said that it provided that any Justice may order medical relief in cases of sudden and dangerous illness, but not admission of paupers into the workhouse. Several of the parochial authorities here remarked, that, in the whole course of their experience, they had never witnessed such a glaring instance of the utter inefficiency of the present system. After a

long discussion, Mr. Wilson undertook to write to Mr. Newsom, soliciting for the applicant's admission into the workhouse." —*Weekly Dispatch*, March 11, 1838.

"CRUELTY OF THE SOMERSET-HOUSE BASHAWS. — The minister, churchwardens, overseers, and rate-payers, of the parish of Shalbourne, in the county of Berks, in vestry assembled, having learned that an order was issued from the Board of Commissioners, about the 16th of May, 1837, to the guardians of the Hungerford Union, prohibiting them affording relief to any able-bodied man, however large his family, otherwise than in the workhouse with the whole of them, addressed a letter to the Potentates, in which they state 'that one Isaac Watts, a labourer of our parish, who has a wife and seven small children, the eldest a girl of about 13 years of age; the second also a girl—these children, at this inclement season of the year, are utterly unable to get employment. The father was in the receipt of 8s. per week, the general price for agricultural labourers in this neighbourhood. This family being reduced to the greatest distress for want of sufficient food, likewise day and night clothing, the father was necessarily compelled, against his will, to leave his master and go with his family into the workhouse; the consequence of which, we consider, has imposed on us a large superfluous weekly expenditure. We have also many large families in extreme distress, in several of which the two eldest are young girls. We earnestly entreat you, therefore, to take these cases into your serious consideration, and beg you will be pleased to rescind the aforesaid order, and give the guardians discretionary power to admit a part of a large family of such children into the workhouse without their parents.' To this letter the Bashaws replied, that 'they are called upon to sanction a recurrence to the exploded practice of granting relief in aid of wages, a practice proved by extensive experience to have the worst possible effect upon the labourer who receives the relief, while it unjustly increases the burden of him who contributes towards it. The Commissioners conceive that the reception of part of a family into the workhouse only presents the same evil under a different form—it is still relief in aid of wages, and, as such, defective and pernicious in its results. Under this impression, and feeling confident that the course they adopt will be ultimately proved to be the most advantageous for all parties, the

Commissioners declare themselves unable to comply with the request of the memorialists."—*Weekly Dispatch*, March 25, 1838.

"The grand object, or at least avowed object, of the New Poor-Law was the reduction of rates, and one of the means of reduction was to give the majority of the poor *many miles to go* to seek relief. The following is an instance of the way in which it works. It will strike the reader at once that it must, in hundreds of thousands of instances, be working in the same way now. This, therefore, is part of that working of the New Law which the Commissioners command, and which the present House of Commons sanction:—

"On the 17th instant an inquest was held at the Union-House, Sudbury, on the body of Samuel Deeks, a pauper, belonging to the parish of Pentlow. It appeared that the deceased, who was 73 years of age, had come to Sudbury in a waggon on Thursday last, for the purpose of getting an increase to his weekly allowance, and having been suffering from asthma for the last eight or nine years, was, on his return, attacked with that complaint so violently that he died in the waggon. The jury considered it necessary to have the attendance of the Relieving Officer, as considerable excitement prevailed on the occasion, and the inquiry was accordingly adjourned to Monday, in order to give time for his attendance, when the officer *fully exculpated himself from all charges of neglect*, and *satisfactorily* proved to the jury that the journey was voluntarily undertaken by the deceased, whose allowance would have been increased had he not attended at the board.—Verdict, Natural death."

"If this poor man's allowance would have been increased without his going to the Board, why was it not done *before* he went to the Board? Why was this poor man, sick, and 73 years of age, ever placed on an allowance so low, that without his appearance at the Board, it was obviously right to raise his allowance? His condition was no worse than it had been for a long while before: and, if it would have been proper to raise his allowance in the week in which he died, he was treated

cruelly and unjustly *till* he died. It is hard to be convinced that a poor man, asthmatic and seventy-three years of age, should have borrowed a waggon to make a journey in weather so cold that he died on the way, and without any necessity for it; but we hope the jury did convince themselves of this; for if they did not, their verdict was not according to the evidence."—*Champion*, Dec. 9, 1838.

"The brutality—we had almost said, and perhaps we should not have been far from the mark—the savage ferocity with which the poor of this country are treated by the Bastile Guardians, instigated by the Somerset-house Bashaws, is becoming intolerable for Englishmen to bear. At the Thames Police-office, on Thursday, a poor fellow, named Ward, applied to the Magistrate for assistance to enable him to purchase some food to save himself and wife, with three young, helpless children, from the jaws of starvation. He had, he said, waited on the Relieving Overseers of the Stepney Union, who refused to afford him relief! Mr. Broderip, who was sitting on the Bench at the time, expressed his deep regret that he could not interfere, as the three Kings had taken the power the Magistrates formerly possessed out of their hands. *The poor man begged hard to be sent to gaol*, where his pressing wants would be relieved: but as there was no offence chargeable, Mr. Broderip, of course, could not comply with the request. The applicant seemed in a dying state; he was afflicted with asthma, and his frame was shrivelled; in fact, he was a mere remnant of what he appeared to have been; and he urged pathetically to be sent to prison, that he might have the consolation of knowing that he would die with a roof over his head. At the request of Mr. Broderip, an order was then obtained from Serjeant, the Relieving Overseer, for a supply of bread and soup (skilly) at the Union Workhouse; the latter individual declaring that he could do no more for the family—he could not furnish them with a lodging for the night! Thus, for aught this Guardian cared, this afflicted family, in the cold month of November, might have been exposed to the streets, and died from the inclemency of the weather; and, but for a person, named Blaby, having given the poor man half-a-crown, and desired him to repeat his visit to the Magistrates, there is no



doubt that the whole family would have been driven to the necessity of huddling together in some nook or corner in the street for a night's repose! Albeit, we are told, with unblushing effrontery, by the three potentates who govern the whole kingdom of poverty with new and excruciating laws, that in cases of necessity, the Guardians may afford the required relief! Was not this a case requiring attention? or is it a matter of no consequence that in happy England, the poor man should die of starvation and houseless? Either the Bashaws propagate rules of seeming philanthropy, which they order their minions not to act upon, or the Guardians refuse to obey their mandate, and act flintheartedly on their own authority. In either case it is revolting to the feelings of an Englishman that, when overtaken by poverty, he is not to be allowed to participate in the relief and shelter afforded from that fund to which he has all his life-time contributed. But what say the callous, brutal officers of Dover? Ward, it seems, applied to them for relief; and to get rid of him and his family, they gave him five shillings, or something more than three farthings a mile, the distance being 72 miles, to furnish himself, his wife, and three children with sustenance on the road, and to find them a lodging for at least three nights on the journey! Really, the conduct altogether of the officers is highly disgraceful, and the hand of indignation points at them with contemptuous scorn."—*Weekly Dispatch*, Nov. 25, 1838.

"On Tuesday an elderly man, nearly blind, and lame with sore feet, whose appearance indicated want of food, complained to the Magistrates that the parish of St. Pancras, to which he belonged, would do nothing for him. He had held one situation for 27 years; but being weak and ill, and unable to work, he was anxious to get into the workhouse. A beadle said that he could do nothing for him; he had no control over the parish. Mr. Burrell thought that an old man, in his situation, deserved some consideration; he could not be suffered to starve in the streets. Beadle—"We think he is able to work and get his living outside." Old Man—"My feet are inflamed, and I cannot work." Beadle—"He was in our workhouse, and the doctor examined his feet, but he said the doctor did not examine them at all. He is always lurking about the workhouse." Mr. Burrell—"I think he ought to be taken into the

workhouse, or relieved." Mr. Bennett concurred with Mr. Burrell, and they both recommended that the beadle should take him to the workhouse to be admitted. Beadle—"I can take him, but I can't say that he will be received: the Board don't sit until Friday." Old Man—"And what am I to do in the mean time? I have no money, nor place to go to." Mr. Burrell suggested that the beadle should give him a trifle till Friday, to enable him to live. Beadle—"I am not empowered to give him anything." Mr. Bennett said the law of nature required that something should be done for him, the man could not live upon nothing; he must be fed; the law of nature, he said, superseded all other laws. The beadle still refused to give him anything, saying that he had no control in the parish. Mr. Bennett and Mr. Burrell concurred, that as the man belonged to the parish, and was evidently old and entitled to relief, that the case ought to be laid before the committee and considered, and they ordered the beadle to take him to the workhouse with their recommendation that he should be admitted until Friday, when the Board would sit. The beadle reluctantly took him to the workhouse."—*Weekly Dispatch*, Jan. 6, 1839.

"We could scarcely believe the following affecting tale to be true, unless we had been assured of the fact by a gentleman whose veracity is unquestionable. A labouring man, named Luckett, was unable to obtain employ; indeed, it is represented to us that such was his state of health, that even had he been successful, he could not have followed his occupation with any satisfaction to his employer. This individual has a wife and five children. He applied to the Herne Union for relief, and was told he must become an inmate in the Bastile, as no out-door succour could be afforded to him. For some time he refused to become an inmate of the establishment; but at length, finding his bodily health decreasing, and his wife and family in a state of starvation, he procured a wheelbarrow, in which he placed three of his children, and drove them to the workhouse, a distance of eight miles, his wife carrying the infant, and his eldest child walking on the road. On their arrival, a supply of bread and butter was doled out to this famishing family, and shortly afterwards they were separated conformably to the rules of the prison. The following day, Luckett was ordered to pick oakum; but not being so expert

as others, or being unable to perform the allotted quantity, he was subsequently put on bread and water! A fortnight having elapsed, and the poor fellow's thumb nails being worn to the quick, he obtained permission to leave the place, the Union agreeing to allow him two shillings a-week and six loaves, worth about two shillings and sixpence more. Lockett having no place of shelter for himself and helpless family, found refuge in a stable, where his distressed situation, at this inclement season, becoming known, he was humanely provided with articles of comfort by a gentleman named Beer, at Canterbury, who has since lodged them in a comfortable room. We are advocates for industry, and we think the Guardians acted perfectly right in setting Lockett to work; but a question arises, whether he was in a state of health to continue his employment. If he was not, the Guardians are culpable; on the other hand, if he was lazy, he deserved punishment. It is another question, whether he can support himself and family on the magnificent allowance of four-and-sixpence a-week! Such cases are sufficient to create abhorrence of the cruel system."—*Weekly Dispatch*, Feb. 4, 1838.

"The detestable Poor-Law Act appears to be working with cruel severity in the county of Devon; insomuch that the Rector of the parish of Chawleigh, the Rev. P. F. Clay, together with the Churchwardens, the two Overseers, and nineteen gentlemen, occupiers of land in the parish, have written a letter to J. W. Buller, Esq., the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, calling his attention to the infernal operations of the rascally Bill; and in which letter those gentlemen have succeeded in showing that the poor are, in comparison, in a worse condition now than they were before the Bastile reared its odious head at Crediton. In fact, in the parish of Chawleigh, some of the aged poor are in a state approaching starvation, owing to the direct influence of this dastardly Whig measure. The worthy Rector and his coadjutors and friends, refer to the cases of Joseph Bawden, and to his sister Grace Bawden, who live in an almshouse. The pay which they receive from the Board is 1s. 6d. per week each, in money, and a loaf of bread each, amounting to the enormous sum of 2s. ! that is, they have something more than 3d. a-day; out of which they are to provide themselves with bedding, food, fuel, and clothes! The next two cases are

those of Elizabeth Hill and John Snell, who live in the same almshouse: both bedridden; the one, paralytic; the other, very infirm and old. Their pay is 2s. 3d. per week each; out of which sum, amounting to barely 4d. a-day, they have to provide themselves with every necessary, except lodging! The third is the case of Michael Hill, and Sarah his wife—the man 78 years of age, the wife more than 70; their pay is only 3s. per week, or 1s. 6d. each. William Ward and his wife, the one 70 years of age, the other 68, have one loaf. The former practice of the parish was to supply the aged, infirm, bedridden and sick poor, with bedding and clothing, as their necessities required, and additional pay in money during winter or any present want. Since the formation of the Union, the bedding and clothing have been refused, and no proportionate increase of pay has followed, so that the poor are left infinitely worse off than they were under the old system. In reply to the communication made to the Guardians, the Clerk was directed to inclose the 1st Report of the Poor-Law Commissioners; in which the duty of the Relieving Officer is distinctly laid down, and who is 'to receive all applications for relief, and report the same to the Board at their next weekly meeting.' Now, several weeks ago, the almost destitute situation of these poor people was mentioned to the Relieving Officer by the Rector, as persons whose allowance, during winter, ought to be increased, and he was desired to examine into their circumstances, and to apply to the Board. But what has been done for them? Why, the Guardian has told them that if they were not content with their present pay, there would be no increase, but he would get an order for them to be sent to the Bastile. This threat, and the dread of being separated from their families and homes, together with the great distance of Chawleigh (twelve miles) from the place of meeting of the Board, deters many from applying to the Relieving Officer or the Board, though it by no means has lessened their suffering and distress during the late severe weather. One would suppose that the frowns of the Somerset-house Bashaws would be sufficient to awe so unimportant a personage as a Relieving Officer; but it appears he is not a very timid gentleman, for he has even resisted *their laws!*"—*Weekly Dispatch*, March 22, 1838.



"I will subjoin to this," says Mr. John Fielden, in a Letter to the *Morning Herald*, dated August 4, 1838, "the narrative of Mrs. Deacon's case, as prepared and sent to me by my friend Mr. Bull, which narrative I read to the Commons' Committee when we were discussing the propriety of hearing Mr. Pearse upon the subject. Mr. Bull obtained his information in person and on the spot, and the principal facts are given under the hand of the party who communicated them. It is as follows :—

"Under the Old Poor-Law this widow, who had been left nine years before with four children, received out-door relief (I think the amount was five shillings weekly). Under the New Law it was gradually withdrawn, and finally discontinued altogether in Sep., 1836.

"At the time of her decease her two girls were at service, and she had her two boys living with her—one 18 years of age, who worked for the Duke of Bedford, and had six shillings a-week (it had been recently raised from five to six shillings a-week); the younger boy had two shillings and sixpence a-week. The elder boy paid his mother four shillings a-week for his board and lodging, requiring the other two shillings for shoes and clothing; so that the three persons had for their subsistence, when the rent was paid (1s. 6d. a-week), something less than three-pence per head per day, to include fuel and clothing for two persons. When her out-door relief was entirely discontinued in September, 1836, she was offered the workhouse. This offer was very grievous to Mrs. Deacon, who begged very earnestly to be allowed but one shilling a-week. She had seen better days, having been the wife of a small farmer, and had been respectably brought up.

"Some time before Michaelmas, 1836, she paid her last visit to the Board of Guardians at Woburn, and, after waiting three or four hours at the workhouse, she was told by Mr. Stratfold, the then Relieving Officer, now at Woburn, that she was not to have any relief at all except in the workhouse. She begged to speak with the gentlemen (the Guardians), but was told that she could not see them. She came home in a very depressed state of mind, and the effect upon her health, at that time not good, was evident. From being, as Mr. Fleet stated, in her young-

days the finest woman in the village, she became from distress of mind (and William Chapman believed, want of sufficient food) most pitiable in her appearance.

"To Mrs. Meltham and others she frequently said, 'they have denied me everything but the workhouse.'

"From the straitness of her income she began to incur debts which she saw no prospect of paying, and this, together with the ultimate and apparently inevitable necessity of accepting the offer of the workhouse, was a source of constant grief to her, and the subject of her frequent complaint to her neighbours. It was stated that she made her appeal to the local guardians without effect. Mrs. Meltham, being on a visit to her daughter, the wife of William Brown, slept several nights with Mrs. Deacon, who usually was glad of her company, and she endeavoured to cheer up her despondency. Though generally distressed in her mind, she became much worse towards Christmas, and on the night of Christmas-day, 1836, was in a very pitiable state, pacing up and down the house, striking her hands together, and talking of her children being ruined or coming to want. Mrs. Meltham had difficulty in persuading her to go to bed, which at last she did, but lay awake, uttering many exclamations of distress. That night, Mrs. Meltham said, she (Mrs. Deacon) seemed to treat her as if she was in her way, though before she had always been so glad of her company. Mrs. Deacon soon left her bed, and walked about the room, striking her hands, and uttering distressing exclamations; and Mrs. Meltham, being alarmed at her disordered state, knocked up at the partition-wall, her son-in-law, Brown, and called Mrs. Deacon's son to get up, which he began to do as soon as she could awake him.

"About this time she saw Mrs. Deacon throw herself into a chair, and clapping her hands violently over her head, she exclaimed, 'The Lord forgive me!' Mrs. D. then went down stairs, and suddenly darted out of the door. Mrs. Meltham hastened the son to follow his mother, which he did, and as soon as he was gone, she put on some of her clothes and her cloak, and went out to alarm the neighbours. It was a bitter night, the ground was covered with snow. The son soon returned in great dread, stating that he had tracked his mother through the snow to the moat of the rector, the Rev. James Reed (about 300 yards distant, as nearly

as I could guess), and that she had thrown herself in. Chapman, Brown, and Pepper, then went down with others, and pulled the corpse from the moat. The clergyman's family were roused, and Mr. Reed sent them word to have the body rubbed, and a surgeon sent for, which was done as soon as they had borne the corpse home upon a door taken from the clergyman's premises. The moat, which I saw, borders upon the rectory garden, and has a little gate opening into it from the road. It was also stated, that the moat was thinly frozen when Mrs. Deacon plunged in, and that during the remainder of the frost, the shape of the body and her head were very distinguishable, so as to excite the attention of passengers.

"An inquest was held on the body, and the jury agreed on a verdict to the effect (the words were not precisely given) that Mrs. Deacon was insane, and had drowned herself in Mr. Reed's moat, on last Monday morning (about two o'clock), through distress of mind in consequence of having been refused relief by the guardians. The coroner, Mr. Reddall, of Woburn, and the auditor of the Union, objected (as Mr. Fleet stated) to the verdict, saying, that the proper verdict was 'insanity,' and that the rest was only the opinion of the jury.

"The jurymen afterwards commenced a subscription out of compassion and respect to the deceased, and in order to prevent her goods being taken from her orphans, if the Union should be put to any expense for her funeral, and the money so collected, amounting to upwards of £10, was to be spent in paying her funeral expenses, in discharging her debts, and the rest to be given to her children. The subscription paper contained a heading to the above effect: Lady Charles Russell, Colonel Seymour, and the servants of the establishment at Woburn Abbey, with many respectable persons around, contributed handsomely."

"CARLISLE.—A most beautiful and affecting discourse was preached in the Coffee-house Assembly Room, on Wednesday evening week, by the Rev. Joseph Forsyth, of Newcastle, in aid of the fund for the defence of that persecuted Christian, J. R. Stephens. The rev. gentleman related an act of great cruelty under the New Poor-Law, which had come under his own immediate observation. I was (said the rev. preacher) requested to go to baptize a child of a poor man, named John

Wilson, whom I found in a most wretched and destitute state, all the furniture in the house would not have sold for a shilling; he was lying on a wretched pallet of straw, with scarcely anything to cover him, his child was lying in another part of the miserable apartment, there was very little fire in the grate, and the weather at the time was very severe. The poor man had served his country as a soldier, and a pension of 3s. 6d. per week was all he and his family had to subsist upon; they had no other resource. I made the minutest inquiries about him, in order to ascertain if he had brought on his horrible destitution by any misconduct of his own, but I could find nothing against him. I rendered him some assistance through some kind friends, but this fund was too soon exhausted, and his poor wife had applied to the guardians, but was not regarded; however, a second application was made and attended to; but in what way do you suppose? Why, they took away his papers for his pension, which amounted, as I before stated, to 3s. 6d., and gave him and his starving family, 4s. per week, which was an addition of 6d. per week." —*Northern Star*, March 13, 1839.

"BOW-STREET. — On Wednesday, a half-starved, miserable-looking young man, on crutches, was brought in custody before Mr. Minshull by a Mendicity officer, charged with begging in the streets. The officer stated, that the defendant belonged to St. Giles's parish, and had been in the workhouse until a few days ago, when he thought proper to leave it. Mr. Minshull—"Why did you leave the workhouse?" Defendant—"Because, your worship, I was half-starved. I was allowed only six ounces of bread in the sick ward, and the doctor would not allow me any more. My appetite is good; and I want for nothing but a few nourishing things to recover my strength, but I could not get food that was fit for me. Nothing but a little bread and water-gruel; and because I complained of the diet, I was told I might go about my business." Mr. Minshull—"But you cannot support yourself, and must not beg." Defendant—"I don't wish to beg, your worship. I would support myself if I had but a few shillings to buy some books. I have made a good living by that before; but when I asked the gentlemen at the workhouse to give me a trifle to set me up, and I would trouble them no longer, they refused to give me a farthing." Mr. Minshull asked the officer 'if the Mendicity Society would



do anything for the young man.' The officer said, 'that it was a rule of the society never to relieve a pauper who had a parish to go to. The officers of St. Giles's acknowledged that the defendant belonged to their parish, and their workhouse was still open to him, if he thought fit to go there.' Defendant—'I can't live upon the food they give me there, it is not sufficient for a child; besides, I don't want to trouble a workhouse when I could earn my own bread, if I had but a few shillings to make a beginning.' Officer—'He is very bad with the rheumatism in his limbs, and I am sure that the workhouse is fitter for him than the streets.' Mr. Minshull—'But I cannot compel him to go into the workhouse against his will.' Defendant—'I am sure to be starved if I go there. The poor creatures are all complaining of the scarcity of food they get.' Mr. Minshull—'I shall discharge you now, but mind, if you are found begging again, you will be sent to prison.'—The defendant hobbled out of the office." —*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Nov. 25, 1837.

"Your Lordship asserts 'that the New Poor-Law works well,' 'that the agricultural labourers are elevated in their character thereby,' 'that their condition is materially improved,' and 'that they now deserve the style and title of INDEPENDENT BRITISH LABOURERS!' It may be so,—let us inquire. Your Lordship has an assistant-commissioner of the name of Neave; he has collected together 103 Guardians of the Poor, for a district called Great Broughton Union. I suppose that he, with the rest of the 'lying prophets,' assures your Lordship 'that in that Union the New Poor-Law works well.' Let us see, my Lord, how he and his one-hundred-and-three-tools, or slaves, manage matters there.

"One *fact* is worth ten thousand *arguments*. You shall have it, my Lord, and, upon the oath which you have sworn, I require you to read this in the House of Commons. I have told you, my Lord, of the troops marching through Manchester on Monday: 'that was a sight, (as Holland Hoole would say) 'to gladden the heart of a monarch.' The one on Tuesday *would have made the royal heart sad*. I saw twenty-one Englishmen, my Lord, her Majesty's subjects, untainted with crime; the poor brethren of Jesus Christ! twenty-one *men*, my Lord, as dear in the sight of God as twenty-one Peers!—I

saw them *geared* and *yoked*, and in the PLACE of HORSES *trailing a waggon*. At first sight, I fancied it was what we called 'a lark,' and that the men were doing it in sport: but I soon found that it was hunger, *pinching hunger*, that had driven them to *degrade MAN* to the level of a BEAST!

"These are your '*independent English labourers*,' my Lord! Thus have you '*elevated* the condition of her Majesty's industrious subjects;' thus is it demonstrated to the people of Manchester, 'that the New Poor-Law does '*work well*' in the agricultural districts!'

"My Lord, their tale is a very short one, but it is worth more, if England will read it, than all the tens of thousands of pages which the House of Commons has printed, at public cost, by order of the Poor-Law Commissioners. Now, my Lord, hear it,—read it in the *Privy Council*, *when the Queen is present*. Have 'a call of the House of Commons' on purpose; read it in your place there, it will do more good than all the speeches your Lordship ever made. Then hand it over to Lord Brougham in the *House of Lords*, that he may read it to their lordships. He need not add a word to it, it will *tell* better without *his* prosings. Then publish it in the *Gazette*. And don't forget, my Lord, to incorporate it in your *new* instructions to the Earl of Durham, that he may persuade the Canadians to be *good children*, by proving to them, *how patient their fathers are, under the scourgings of the Whigs*.

"WE ARE TWENTY-ONE LABOURERS; WE COME FROM BEYOND DELLAMERE FOREST IN CHESHIRE; WE CAN GET NO WORK,—NO RELIEF,—AND WE WERE HUNGRY. A FARMER, WHO IS A VERY KIND MAN, WANTED TO SEND SOME POTATOES TO MANCHESTER; HE OFFERED US TWO SHILLINGS A LOAD, IF WE WOULD BRING THEM HERE. WE WERE THIRTY MILES OFF, AND WE HAD NO BREAD: SO HE LET US HAVE THIRTY-TWO LOADS, AND WE WERE VERY THANKFUL.'

"This, my Lord, is *their* tale; it has been heard in Heaven! and if you will not repeal the accursed *New Poor-Law* which *caused it*, it will soon be avenged on earth!

"My Lord, these men must have been *honest*, or the farmer would *not* have trusted them with his waggon and thirty-two loads of potatoes. They must have been *industrious*, or they would *not* have done the work of horses.

"If her Majesty had seen *this* sight, I will tell you *what* she would have done. I am sure she would have done it, my Lord, because *she is a Queen and a Christian*. She would have *ordered* those twenty-one honest, industrious men, out of harness: she would instantly have given them a pension of £1,500 a-year amongst them. Then she would have *ordered* the twenty-one Assistant Poor-Law Commissioners into their places. She would have distributed the potatoes to the Poor. She would have *ordered* an Iron Cage to have been placed on the Waggon, and *in that Cage*, she would have placed, in Union Dresses, *the three New Poor-Law Commissioners*; Lord Althorpe, she would have commanded to be the Driver, and Lord Brougham the Guard. This whole Cortegé, she would have *ordered* to parade through England, *from Union Bastile to Union Bastile*. Yes, she would have clad these fiends in 'Gogram,' she would have 'forced' *them* to luxuriate upon 'Skilly;' upon *her own head* she would have taken the responsibility, and she would have said to the people of Manchester, 'I command this because I *do* love MERCY, and I will *do* JUSTICE!'—*Oastler's Letter to Lord John Russell*, dated Feb. 7, 1838.

#### "HUMANE TREATMENT OF A PAUPER!"

—At the Chelsea Petty Session, on Thursday, Mr. Ryder, one of the Chelsea Guardians of the Kensington Union, attended before Captain Bague and Mr. Flood, jun., the sitting magistrates, to ask their assistance under the following circumstances: Mr. Ryder stated, that one of the female paupers, in the Chelsea workhouse of the Union, had been for some time labouring under a complaint from which, under the treatment of the medical officer of the workhouse, she got no relief. Previous to her entrance into the house she had been several times much relieved by the medical treatment of Dr. Barre, of the Chelsea Dispensary, and she had been extremely urgent to him for permission to have the benefit of that gentleman's advice. He had accordingly given the master an order for her to leave the workhouse for that purpose; but at the last meeting of the Board of Guardians he was much surprised at the master reporting that he had not obeyed it, alleging as a reason, that as it clashed with the general orders of the Poor-Law Commissioners and of the Guardians, not to suffer any person to go out of the work-

house, unless they quitted it for life, he had thought better to refuse it. He (Mr. Ryder,) feeling strongly on the importance of the paupers having medical advice in which they could place confidence, condemned the conduct of the master; but the majority of the Guardians appeared to approve of it, and eventually passed a resolution that 'No pauper in any of the Union workhouses, be their complaint whatever it may, shall consult any medical man but the one engaged for that house,' alleging as a reason, that if the rule were departed from in one instance, there would be no end to the disorderly conduct resulting from it. The Bench regretted their inability to interfere, the New Poor-Law leaving such questions under the control of the Guardians only; still they thought that in particular and extreme cases such a rule might be beneficially departed from"—*Northern Star*, March 2, 1839.

"The following is an Extract of a Letter addressed to Mr. Samuel Roberts, by Thomas Rogers, Esq., of Devonshire-square, London, being the case of *Hersey v. Pechell* and others:—

"The plaintiff is now 49 years of age, and is one of eleven children. He was born in the house or hut on South Ambersham Common, in Hants, from which he was lately ejected. At the age of 16 he entered the army, and having completed his term of nine years, principally abroad, and including the expedition to Walcheren, he returned to the home of his father in the year 1816, and found it closed, and his father dead—the death having occurred two years previously. Inquiring of the neighbours for the key, he was told it was in the possession of Farmer Lee, who was almost perpetual Overseer of the place; he went to the farmer, who returned with him to the cottage, and opening the door, told him that, at his father's dying request, he had held the key and the furniture for him until his return from the army, and that now the cottage and the goods were all his own. He did in fact find the very goods which his father had been in possession of since he could remember, and which had been given to him by his wife's friends at their original entry into the cottage in the year 1774, and with them a bed, which plaintiff himself had purchased out of his earnings, and had left in his father's care previous to his going



abroad. Attached to the cottage was a garden containing about a rood of land, and planted with fruit-trees, principally by his father; the apples alone have frequently measured 25 bushels, and been sold for 2s. a-bushel. On his arrival at home, he asked for no relief, having yet to spare of his discharge money, and being immediately employed by Farmer Lee, there was no occasion for any subsequent application. After continuing two years, he, by the advice of the farmer, went out of the parish in search of work, on the plea that labourers among the married men were abundant. On that occasion he took the key in his pocket, and returned in the autumn, when he gathered and sold his apples. Again, in the following year, he locked up his cottage, but left the key for safe custody with a neighbour. It so happened, that Farmer Lee, coming one day to the spot, was told by Mrs. Sivier, the neighbour, that she had the key, and that she was afraid of losing it; upon which he said he would take care of it for Hersey, and took it away with him. Within six months afterwards, plaintiff coming to see that his cottage and furniture were all right, and being informed that the key was in Lee's hands, he went down to him, and after asking him if he could be there employed, and answered in the negative, inquired whether he (Lee) would be kind enough to keep the key for him, as he could procure jobs elsewhere; and he thought it might be some time before he returned, as he found it very uncomfortable to be living in the cottage without any one to take care of it for him. Lee acceded to his request, and seconded his intention of obtaining work in other parishes.

"After an absence of about two years, plaintiff married, and brought his wife to Farmer Lee, and resumed possession of his dwelling and garden, since which (1821) they have had the uninterrupted enjoyment, without payment of any rent, or making any acknowledgment. In 1836, the Guardians of the Poor, by order of the Poor-Law Commissioners, put up this cottage, with three others adjoining, for sale by auction; and the Chairman, Mr. Hollest, being the only bidder, was declared the purchaser at £82, and took on himself the duty of ejecting the plaintiff: he proceeded under the Act, which enables two justices summarily to eject all persons who have either intruded themselves into, or been

permitted to occupy, any parish-houses, on a proof of a month's notice to quit: and the warrant being granted, Jenner, the Churchwarden, with seven assistants, forced open the door—turned plaintiff, his wife, and four children, out upon the common—the snow then falling fast—and placed a padlock upon the door. The wife being *enciente*, miscarried from fright, and her health was destroyed, in all probability, for ever;—and fortunate it was that Mrs. Osborne, a widow, and an occupier of the adjoining cottage, invited her and her infant to share her bed, otherwise the consequences might have proved serious—for poor Hersey and the three other children were obliged to sleep for months under a tent which he pitched on the common. This happened in March, and she felt extremely weak at the ensuing harvest, although compelled by necessity to work. To bring Hersey to, they tried the starving system; for South Ambersham being in the hands of three or four farmers, it was agreed that young Lee, the successor of the Lee before-mentioned, should discharge plaintiff (who had been in his service nine years) from his employ,—and that no other individual should give him work,—and then he was obliged to apply to the Guardians for relief; but the purchaser sitting as Chairman, facetiously observed to him, he was a man of property, but if he and his family wished to come into the workhouse, they should have an order.

"It was at this stage that Mr. Wood, of Midhurst, a man of property, interfered on his behalf, without success; and having heard of me as connected with the Poor-Laws, he introduced the labourer to me. In consequence I prepared a petition to the Lords, and Lord Stanhope presented it; but though it occasioned considerable debate, the only reply was, that the question should be entertained by a Court of Law:—the Bishop of Exeter remarking, that it was a mockery to offer such advice to a man so situated. However, one morning in September or October, he found his cottage door open, and in he trundled with his family, supposing the parish-officers had made the way clear for him: he soon discovered his mistake by the service of another notice to quit, which was followed by a summons, warrant, and ouster as before; but instead of locking-up the door, Jenner, the Guardian, ordered the roof to be taken off, and the doors and windows to be carried away.

“ ‘ Having had a sight of the warrant, or a copy of it, I think it is altogether null and void ; and having that ground, as well as the ground upon the title, I have commenced an action against the four magistrates, and all who were concerned in its execution, which is to be tried at the next Assizes for Winchester, by a special jury, obtained by the magistrates. The object of the motion to the Court the other day was to stay proceedings, unless Mr. Wood, who had spoken warmly and corresponded with me on plaintiff’s behalf, would give security for costs. He showed cause, and discharged the rule ; but, inasmuch as the Court thought the magistrates had ground for the application, they declined to give Mr. Wood any costs, and therefore, for his humanity, he has to pay £122 for the costs of four motions, there being two sets of defendants, and two actions, viz., Hersey’s and Osborne’s. I should not omit telling you that, until his third child, Hersey never received anything to be construed into relief, and then only as all other labourers, part of his wages. Since 1835, no relief upon commencement of these actions, but within the last quarter, the Relieving Officer gave him three loaves, and the Board have described him in their last quarterly list as a *vagrant*. ”—*Sheffield Iris*, June, 1839.

“ **Huddersfield.**—**NEW POOR-LAW.**—The Board of Guardians held their weekly meeting on Monday last. The Guardians opposed to the Amendment-Bill, find their time wasted and themselves mortified by the pinch-belly gang, who stick to the starvation of the poor, as a cobbler to his last. Screwing and bellygripping is the order of the day, as the advocates of the Devil’s law manage to outvote the friends of the poor. Among the applicants for relief, was a person named Betty Taylor, who had been sent to Wakefield House of Correction for two months, on the information of Dean, for breaking some squares of glass in the Almondbury workhouse. On being asked the usual question, ‘ What she applied for,’ she said she wanted some relief, and also her children, who were in Almondbury workhouse. On being asked why she broke the glass at the workhouse, she replied, that hearing her child cry vehemently, she broke the window that separated them. Why did they separate her from her child ? She had asked the Mistress for some

bread and butter for the child because it was ill, and had had nothing all the day. The Mistress told her she made more bother over her child than all the rest, and wished the Master would take her under hand. She stated that she was afterwards called into the Master’s room with the child, and that he, without speaking a single word, dashed her against a table ; she then ran into the public room, into which he followed her, and dashed her on the floor, struck her repeatedly on the breast, and kicked her in various parts of her body, to such an extent, that blood ran into her shoes ; when she could disengage herself from him, she ran out of the house, when the Master locked the door. Being thus separated from her infant, which cried very much, in her frenzy she was induced to break the glass that separated her from her child, for which offence she was sentenced to two months’ imprisonment in Wakefield House of Correction. Notwithstanding the woman’s statement of the evil treatment she had received from the Master of Almondbury workhouse, and that the poor woman was terrified at the idea of going near him any more, yet those merciful and right truly Christian deacons and chapel-going Guardians would grant her relief nowhere but under the same tyrant. A fortnight ago, one of the Guardians was charged with neglect of duty, by permitting a poor insane female to be badly treated in the same workhouse. He mentioned the case to his brother Guardians, but the Malthusian set blew it away as a matter of course ; however, the following day, the Guardians went into the house of the lunatic’s father, and an examination of the family produced the following facts :—Betty Kilner was in the Almondbury workhouse about seven weeks. The first week her friends visited her, Dean, the Master, told them, in an arrogant tone, that they had no business there ; that they had delivered her over to his keeping, and that they must stay away ; so rude was this ‘ Jack in office,’ that the poor people dared not go again during her stay until, hearing the barbarous treatment she was receiving, they determined on taking her away altogether, as they said they had rather starve than have her so badly treated. When they got her home, they found a bruise upon her nose, one upon the left cheek, and another under her jaw ; her back was so much bruised and injured, that she could not bear her sister



to touch her in bed; her knees and legs were disfigured with bruises: she says that Dean and his wife inflicted them by throwing her on the floor and otherwise maltreating her. On Friday, the 11th, the father and mother of Betty Kilner attended to state the condition of their daughter. After the case had been heard, the house divided for and against; when, strange to say, the numbers were equal, and stranger still, that the Chairman (of whom better things were expected) voted against their admission; and so the affair rests until a committee visits the workhouse, where the inmates, having the fear of Dean before their eyes, will not dare to state the truth."—*North-east Star*, Jan. 26, 1841.

"At the Mansion-house, London, on Tuesday, before Mr. Alderman White, who sat for the Lord Mayor, a destitute woman, named Ann Stevens, was charged with having broken a window, for the purpose, as she told a policeman, of being sent to a prison to be saved from starving. Alderman White said he frequently perceived, in the course of the performance of his magisterial duties, that poor persons, although accused of no offence, wished to be sent to prisons, where they must associate with offenders, rather than to workhouses; and the reason, he did not doubt, was, that in prisons they had comforts which were denied to mere poverty. Was not poverty treated worse than crime in some instances? The woman said that she was in great wretchedness, and that a prison was the only place she could look to for keeping the life in her. She knew what the other places were well enough. She had been in the service of many respectable families, and lived last at No. 8, Aldermanbury, where she had been sixteen months, and from which she came away with a little money, with which she had since supported herself. Alderman White—"Let her be taken to the Union in Cannon-street, they will take care of her there." Woman—"I hope you'll send me to prison, Sir; I am sure of something there." Alderman White—"You shall go to the Relieving Officer, and I shall give particular directions about you." The woman then went with the officer from the justice-room, but soon afterwards returned, and the officer stated, that as they were going along the street, she flung a stone at and broke another window. Alderman White—"Now you shall certainly go to prison." The wo-

man—"Thank you, Sir; that's what I want. I am able and willing to work, but it's hard to perish." Alderman White—"You are committed to Bridewell for three months." The woman—"Oh, Sir, I'm much obliged to you, the longer the better, Sir. I'm sure I'm thankful to you."—*Leeds Intelligencer*, Dec. 26, 1840.

"A weekly allowance to a poor woman residing in Southampton, 84 years of age, and an out-pauper of one of the parishes in the Devizes Union, having for a short time been discontinued, the old lady determined upon facing the Guardians. On Saturday last she walked from Southampton to Salisbury, a distance of 22 miles; and on Monday from Salisbury to Devizes, 22 miles farther. On Tuesday she presented herself to the Board, when the Guardians, after attentively listening to her story, determined to continue one-half of her former allowance—1s. a-week instead of 2s., with which she appeared satisfied, and yesterday returned to Southampton on foot. It appears she gets a trifle by going errands, and selling a little tape."—*Devizes Gazette*, April 18, 1840.

"SHOCKING DESTITUTION. — On Tuesday, the beadle of St. Mary-le-Strand, was informed that a man, named William Spaight (late of the Spanish Legion) was lying in a dying state on a heap of rubbish, in George-yard, Drury-lane. He found the wretched man in a state of starvation nearly naked; a horse-cloth was procured and wrapped round him, and some warm beer given him by the Relieving Officer of the Strand Union, who ordered a cab, in which he was conveyed to the workhouse in Cleveland-street, where he expired on the same night."—*Champion*, Jan. 26, 1840.

"At the Boston police-office on Tuesday, John Marshall, a pauper, was charged by the Guardians of the Union with leaving the workhouse, without permission, in the clothes of the Union. Marshall has a wife at the Asylum at Lincoln, who was stated to be dying; the poor fellow, dreadfully agitated at the news, set off immediately, and walked to Lincoln to see his wife before her dissolution, and on his way back was taken into custody, at the instigation of the Poor-Law authorities. The magistrates pressed the Guardians to recall the charge, and suffer the poor man to go back to the workhouse, saying, that the feelings that instigated the prisoner to leave the house

abruptly did him honour rather than call for blame. The workhouse-keeper said he had the positive orders of the Board to insist on the law's being fulfilled, and the magistrates were obliged to commit the poor man for three months' imprisonment in the House of Correction."—*Stamford Mercury*, April 11, 1840.

"UXBRIDGE PETTY SESSIONS.—On Wednesday, a decent looking woman, named Mary Bray, was brought by the overseers of Ruislip, before Messrs. T. T. Clark, jun., and R. H. Cocks, the sitting magistrates, for having deserted her children, and left them chargeable to the Uxbridge Union. The overseers stated, that three children of Bray's had for some time been inmates of the Union workhouse, and that the defendant, on being desired to come in also, had absented herself from the place until the previous day. Bray denied that she had absconded. She had, she said, applied for the permission of the Guardians to procure a situation, and had got one at East Acton; but so tardy were the Guardians in giving her permission, that, when she went there, the lady, after waiting three weeks, had procured another servant. She then went on to London, and had since supported herself by needle-work. Mr. Clark, Jun.—'How much have you earned per week?' Bray—'About 6s.' Mr. Clark, Jun.—'Then I apprehend the Union will not maintain your three children, if you earn so much as 6s. a-week; you must take them out, or go into the workhouse yourself.' Bray—'I do not wish to go into the workhouse, while I can maintain myself out; I would rather starve out of it than go into it. I only want the parish to assist me with my children.' Mr. Clark, Jun.—'We can't let you be out unless you take your children out also. You must either support them out of the workhouse, or go in yourself.' Bray, in strong terms, expressed her determination not to go into the house, and she was ultimately told to attend the next meeting of Guardians, when her case would be decided on."—*Champion*, Aug. 25, 1839.

"NORTH DERBYSHIRE UNION AT CHESTERFIELD.—A correspondent sends us the following particulars, stated by a man who has recently left this Bastile:—He declares, that he will not go into it again till all other means of existence fail him; then he may go for the purpose of dying, but never more will he go under the pretence of receiving relief. He

says, that those who labour hard in the prison, and he was one who did labour hard, do not have a sufficiency of meal and water-gruel, with a little coarse bread to eat with it, for their breakfast; that their dinners are neither good in quality, nor sufficient in quantity; that their next and only meal (the supper) consists of porridge, with which some blue milk, consisting principally of water, is taken. He says, also, that one day he was very unwell, and felt a pressing desire to have some tea, thinking that it would do him much good. He asked to be allowed a little tea, but the reply was, 'How can you have the assurance to ask for such a thing, knowing that it cannot be allowed?' He states further, that on the entrance of a man, his wife, and children, into this great and mighty prison, the husband is forcibly separated from his wife, the children from their mother, and all put into separate cells; that all their Christianlike clothes are stripped off, and a prison-dress put on, marked with certain letters and numbered, in order, as he says, to degrade them, though the clothing does not keep them warm. With respect to the fact of severing the families, the husbands from wives, and children from their parents, he declares that it is not possible to have the chance of seeing each other again, unless it be in the event of death terminating their miseries; for he says, the walls surrounding the yards are as high as those at the New Bailey in Manchester. He states also, that on the Sunday the men and women are not allowed to worship God at one and the same time, for one Sunday morning the men attend service, and in the evening the women attend; the Sunday morning following the women attend, and the men in the evening, and so on, in turns; so that, in order completely to separate them, they are robbed of the chance of worshipping their Creator the usual number of times on the Sunday. He says that the scale of allowance, that is, the cost of the inmates, is so low as 1s. 3d. per head per week, including those who labour twelve hours a-day; and that, should one of those unfortunate persons (who labour) want to quit the prison, he is told tauntingly, that he must be very uncomfortable. After this man's imprisonment, he was not allowed either shirt, clogs, or shoes, to come out with, though it was in the depth of winter; and it is the invariable rule, that if a person goes in without a shirt, he must come



out without one.”—*Champion*, March 8, 1840.

“The other day (April 11, 1839), a poor, respectable, tidy, but wan-faced looking woman went up, with a young child in her arms, to a fellow who was drinking at the ——— public-house, Hereford, and asked him if he knew her? No, he didn’t, d—d him! Nor this child? No. Would he give her 6d., for she was starving? No, he wouldn’t, but called out a buxom, fat wench whom he was courting, and who belonged to the house, and they both ‘doubled’ (beat) her dreadfully. The maid fiercely bade her go about her business; *he* didn’t want anything to do with her! The poor woman took her famishing babe and departed in silent agony. Blessed New Poor-Law, and blessed bastardy clause, when the gross and brutal libertine can thus, with *legal impunity*, riot in the satisfaction of his lustful passions, and cast, with blows and savage imprecations, his victim—his starving and almost broken-hearted and dying victim, from him!”—*From a Hereford Correspondent*.

“A fellow, named Thomas Totman, was appointed to superintend the children in Warwick workhouse; and this man was, on Monday last, taken before the Magistrates, charged with misconduct in ill-treating a poor, friendless child named Thomas Hewins, aged about two years and a-half, the son of a widow. The child in question was a temporary inmate of the Bastile, and was unfortunately placed under the care of Totman. The child was in the habit of dirtying itself, most probably its bowels being affected by a change of diet, or from natural causes; and for this the child, an infant two years and a-half old, was punished by *having its own excrements forced into its mouth!*”—*Weekly Dispatch*, Jan. 24, 1841.

“Last night, a coroner’s inquest was taken before Mr. Baker, at the King and Queen, Hare-street, Bethnal-green, on view of the body of Charlotte Leonard, aged 71; when the Jury returned a verdict—‘That the deceased died from want, occasioned by the gross negligence of the parochial authorities of St. Mathew, Bethnal-green, and of St. Luke’s, Middlesex.’”—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Oct. 28, 1837.

“SUPPOSED DEATH FROM DESTITUTION.—On Monday, an inquest was held at Horsleydown, on the body of Charles Freeman, a native of Gloucester, who was

found in the streets on Saturday evening in an exhausted condition, and conveyed to the workhouse, where he died in the course of the night. The body presented a very emaciated and haggard appearance, but from the state in which the man was at the time of his admission to the workhouse, nothing definite could be learned respecting his circumstances. He said he was a smith by trade, and had come to London in search of work.—Verdict, ‘Natural death.’”—*Champion*, Dec. 2, 1838.

“THE TORTURE REVIVED IN ENGLAND.—The two poor girls, Byrom and Jones, whose lives the people of Chester and St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields, saved, in despite of the much more murderous and bloodthirsty Poor-Law Commissioners—are, it seems (unless the people again interfere) to be doomed to *worse* than death! The sentence is commuted to five years’ imprisonment, with hard labour, a *quarter* of each year to be *solitary* confinement, and *then* transportation for life. Transportation for life would not do, it seems, without five years’ of preliminary torment. If this sentence be contrasted with that of the gentlemen duellist, the *animus* is clear. Lord John Russell is evidently revenging himself and the villains of Poor-Law Commissioners upon the wretched girls for the conduct of the people in saving them from the gallows! It was felt that in the popular acquittal of the girls was involved the condemnation of the unnatural Poor-Law. This was branding on the cheek, and gall and wormwood to the little lordling wasp. Nothing is so vindictively cruel as a Malthusian Whig-political philosopher; and we have no doubt that they would have, in revenge, put the two miserable creatures to the rack if they had dared. As it is, the sentence is sufficiently disgusting. One instinctively loaths the unmanly beings who can *refine* upon torture in this way. No right-thinking man would inflict this, even upon the Commissioners themselves, and that is a great deal to say. We trust this will not be suffered to sleep. It is disgusting, and worse than useless cruelty. The men of England must put a stop to it.”—*Northern Liberator*, Oct. 6, 1838.

“DEATH BY STARVATION.—On Tuesday, an inquest was held at the Lord Clive, Duke-street, Manchester-square, on the body of William Murray, aged five years, who died under most melancholy and distressing circumstances. The

father of the deceased took a miserable lodging some weeks ago, with his five children. He had, it appeared, no work, and refused to make application to the parish, and used to absent himself for days, leaving the children without food. On Sunday last, the deceased was found extended upon a palliasse, almost the only article of furniture in the room, quite dead, and in a most frightful state of emaciation. The surviving children were also in a state of starvation. The Jury, after severely animadverting upon the conduct of the father, for not applying to the parish for relief in his dreadful circumstances, returned a verdict, 'That the deceased died of starvation and neglect.'—*Weekly Dispatch*, Feb. 21, 1836.

"Who shall say that the pauper-starving-five-thousand-a-year Lord Brougham's Bill for amending the Poor-Laws is not an iniquitous measure! Every day fresh instances of atrocity are brought to light—atrocities which could only be perpetrated under the protection of an Act of Parliament, as cold-blooded, inhuman, and unfeeling as any single act of the brutal Nero. Take the following heart-rending case. It is enough to make the country rebel against the laws, or rather their administration. James Hardwicke, an old industrious man, was summoned to show cause why he did not pay to the Cheltenham Poor-Law Union the amount they had already expended in maintaining the child of the defendant's daughter, and also to be ordered in future to pay the amount of the child's keep. The defendant's daughter married a man, by whom she had the child now in the Union workhouse, but, finding that her husband had another wife, she indicted him for bigamy, the proof of which failed from the non-arrival of witnesses, and the man on his acquittal left the country. The female deserted her child, leaving it chargeable to the Union, the authorities of which, finding out the poor old father of the child's parent, took the present proceedings against him under the clause to that effect in the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. The defendant complained of the hardship upon him in taxing the labour of his days of infirmity and pain to support the child of the young and healthy. The Magistrate said that the Act did, in this instance, inflict extreme hardship; but, however painful it was to them, they were bound to administer it, and they must order him to pay 4s. 6d. per week to the Union for the child's

support."—*Weekly Dispatch*, August 5, 1839.

"A NEW REMEDY FOR VICE.—At the last meeting of the Stamford Board of Guardians, it was stated by one of the members, that in the parish he represented at that Board, there were no fewer than sixteen females who had burdened the parish with their illegitimate offspring. In order to oblige the parents of these females to send the girls from home, the Board sagely proposes to enter into an agreement not to employ the old people until the girls are sent away. Mr. Hall, the new Assistant-Commissioner, who was present at the Board, immediately condemned the resolution, as a strange remedy against vice, to throw persons into idleness and want, and punishing the parent for the fault of the child—a manifestly immoral course. The way to remedy the vice lay with those setting the example to their children, and the clergyman was a much better monitor than the idleness of a parent."—*Champion*, Dec. 2, 1838.

"On Tuesday last, at the close of the business in the Police-court, at Hull, a poor woman, with a child in her arms, applied to the Magistrates for a pass to London. Mr. Parker said it was not in the power of the bench to grant her request; but if she pleased, he would hear her statement. She said she was the wife of a man whose name was Edmund Lee, by trade a paper-stainer, and that they belonged to London, but had been to Pontefract, where her husband had been laid up ill for two months; they had two children, and had been sent to Hull by the Guardians of the Poor at Pontefract; they had only two shillings and a few pence, and they could not go to London under eight shillings. The Magistrate said he thought it a very hard case, and that it was his opinion that the authorities at the workhouse ought to do something for them. Mr. Eyre, the Magistrates' clerk, said they certainly ought, but would not. Mr. Moxon had told him repeatedly that in such cases they were resolved to afford no relief; it was most oppressive to those poor people. Mr. Parker—It is most abominable; suppose this woman was quite destitute, she might starve in the streets. How is the state of our poor-box? Mr. Eyre said that it was at present supplied with ample funds; they had even got gold in it. Mr. Parker said he was glad of it. It was not the duty of the Magistrates to pay the fare of this



family to London, but he was thankful that the state of the box enabled them to do so. He then directed the police to see them on board the next day, and to pay the 8s. for the passage, and give them 2s. to procure a little food. They dare not place us under the hellish law, but they approximate to it as near as possible."—*Northern Star*, April 14, 1838.

"DEATH FROM WANT.—On Monday an inquest was held at the John Bull public-house, Tyer-street, adjacent to Lambeth workhouse, upon the body of John Cox, aged 60, who it is believed died from want, and exposure to night air. It appeared that the unfortunate man had been in a most wretched state of destitution, and compelled to sleep in the streets several nights. On Wednesday morning he went into the tap-room of the Queen's Head, Lambeth, to warm himself, and the landlord was so stricken with his deathly countenance that he sent to Mr. Dunn, one of the Relieving Officers, who had him removed to the workhouse, where he expired in less than two hours. One of the parish-officers stated, that the deceased had for some time received from that parish 1s. 6d. per week, which a juror observed it was utterly impossible for any man to exist upon.—Verdict, 'Died from inflammation of the lungs.'"  
—*Sunday Times*, Jan. 14, 1838.

"John Copley, a man who had escaped from one of the Leicester Union workhouses, gave himself up to the magistrates on Tuesday last, he having heard that the Poor-Law Guardians had taken out a warrant against him for the offence of leaving the workhouse without permission. The charge being made by the keeper that Copley having been refused permission to go out of the workhouse, and having been locked in a yard, he scaled the wall, and escaped; the prisoner, who stated his case with an ability and clearness that surprised all present, said, 'I was out of employ, my wife and five children starving; as a last resource I went into the workhouse, to save those I loved from death. I was taken to one house, and my poor wife and children to another. My remnant of furniture was sold; I was denied permission to see my family. Sir, my wife and children are as dear to me as your lady and family to you. I asked to go out to try to obtain work; this was refused me. I persevered in my demand to be permitted to seek employment, that I might be restored to those I loved; my firm but respectful requests were met by

being locked up, and I determined to escape and seek that means of rendering myself happy that the law denied me. I got a situation as a stoker to a steam-engine, and in the last three weeks have saved from my trifling wages 10s., which I offer the Union towards my wife's support, and I will submit to any privation to make the greatest allowance I am able, until I can get the means of supporting them, and a place over their heads.' The worthy Magistrates were sensibly affected by the poor fellow's tale, but the *Union Poor-Law Officer* demanded a conviction under the Statute, (that is, the Poor-Law Act,) and they said, as they were placed there to administer the law as they found it, they had only the option of sending him back to the workhouse on his promise of conforming to the rules, or else they must commit him to gaol, and hard labour. The prisoner said *he would prefer a Gaol to the Workhouse*, and asked whether the Union would not take his offer, 3s. a-week out of the 10s. he earned? This was refused; and the Magistrates, expressing their great commiseration for the man, advised him to go to the workhouse, as he would, on his discharge from prison, be sent there, or again committed to gaol, as *the law now stands*. Copley said, as the kind feeling of their worships convinced him of their advising him for the best, he yielded to their judgment, and would go to the workhouse. On retiring he expressed his deepest gratitude for the interest the Bench felt on his behalf. The man bears an excellent character for industry and affection to his wife and children."—*Times*, Nov. 27, 1837.

"RASCALITY OF THE WHIG POOR-LAW.—So, it has come to this, that one of the principal features of that infernal measure, the beastly Poor-Law Bill, is to get rid of the destitute poor in a manner that is repulsive to the feelings of every humane Englishman, and in direct opposition to the principles of the English Constitution. But for the humanity which has actuated the Guardians of the poor, as well as the rate-payers of St. George-the-Martyr, Southwark, in all probability two more victims would have fallen sacrifices at the shrine of this Draconian law. The individuals alluded to were two little boys of the names of Morrison and Smith, of the respective ages of 10 and 8 years. The poor little fellows had been inmates of the Cambridge Union workhouse, from which place they ran away, and on Satur-

day, the 13th ultimo, one of the police constables of the M division found the two little fellows sitting on the step of a door, huddled together, and in answer to his inquiries, they stated that they had no place to go to, neither had they any food to eat. Accordingly he took them to the workhouse, where they were instantly admitted and fed. In reply to the questions of the master, the boys said they had been, ever since they could recollect, inmates of the workhouse of the Cambridge Union, and the reason why they ran away was in consequence of a larger boy saying that they would be able to get places in London where they would live better. They accordingly stole out of the house and walked up to the metropolis, begging on the road. On their arrival, they missed their companion, and having no place, and being strangers, they went and sat down on the step of a door. On the following board-night the two children were brought before the St. George's Board of Guardians, and there being no doubt as to their being inmates of the Cambridge Poor-house under the Old Law, Mr. Robinson, the master, was directed to write to the clerk of the Union, requesting that the Guardians would adopt measures to receive back the two little fellows. In reply to this letter, the following unfeeling and infamous one was received from the Clerk of the Cambridge Union, directed to Mr. Robinson, the master:—

“ ‘Cambridge Union.

“ ‘Sir,—Your letter to the Workhouse Master of this Union, relative to the two boys, Morrison and Smith, was this day produced and read at the weekly meeting of the Board of Guardians of this Union, and I am directed by the Board to acquaint you, that they have resolved you must pursue what course you think proper respecting their removal, by order of the Justices in the usual manner. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

“ ‘J. DEACON FETCH, Clerk.’

“In consequence of this answer, and the impossibility arising from the tender ages of the boys, it was discovered that, under the law of settlement, as laid down by the Poor-Law, an insurmountable difficulty existed as to sending the boys back in the manner required, for they were too young themselves to give the necessary evidence as to their place of settlement, and there was no chance to obtain this fact by any course which might be adopted. At the same time, if allowed to remain in St. George's workhouse, they would become settled with them; while, on the other side, if ordered to be turned out, they might probably die from want in the

streets. At length, Mr. Day said he would wait on the Magistrates at Union-hall, and ascertain if they had the means of sending the two little fellows to Cambridge. When the case was submitted for the consideration of Mr. Traill, that gentleman declared, that such was the state of the law, that he must send the boys to *gaol before they could be passed to the Union from whence they had escaped!* and they were accordingly sent to Brixton. This, Englishmen, is the state at which the poor of this once happy and flourishing country have arrived. Time was when there was shelter for the destitute. How different is the case now. Unless the Guardians of parishes fly in the face of the Somerset-house crew, and, with humanity and courage in their breasts, insist upon granting relief to those who are poor and have none to help them, they may rot in the street, or commit a robbery in order to obtain lodging and sustenance; and this under an Act which has already cost the country £75,000, and the paupers rivers of sweat and blood.”—*Weekly Dispatch*, August 5, 1839.

“BURIAL OF PAUPERS.—The rule, as recommended by the Poor-Law Commissioners, to burthen the parish where a pauper dies out of the Union, has already been attended with some acts of cruelty and oppression. It appears to have suggested itself under the impression that, in the end, it will inflict no pecuniary loss to individual parishes, the obligation to bury being reciprocal; but such is by no means satisfactory, of which a proof is afforded in a letter, signed ‘J. Bennett,’ inserted in the *Northampton Mercury* of the 27th ult. It therein appears that a pauper, upwards of 90 years of age, left his own parish to visit his nephew, a poor labouring man, residing in an adjoining parish, but out of the Union to which he belonged, a spot where, it is said, he had expressed a wish to die. In a day or two after his arrival the old man was suddenly seized with paralysis. The Board of Guardians of the Union in which this poor man's parish is situated, on the receipt of the surgeon's certificate, ordered him the relief necessary; but in order that the parish where the pauper was lying, speechless, ‘might not be burthened with the expenses of his burial, he was taken from his bed, in opposition to the will of his nephew,’ as stated by Mr. Bennett, ‘put into a common carrier's van, and sent to the parish to which he belonged.’”—*Sunday Times*, Nov. 11, 1838.



## UNION BASTILES ARE PRISONS, AND WORSE !

“ ————— Hail, horrors ! hail,  
Infernal world ! and thou, profoundest hell ! ” — PARADISE LOST.

“ Omnia te adversum spectantia, nulla retrorsum. ” — HORATIUS.

“ A prison ! Heav’ns, I loath the hated name !  
Famine’s metropolis ; the sink of shame ;  
A nauseous sepulchre, whose craving womb  
Hourly inters poor mortals in its tomb.  
By ev’ry plague and ev’ry ill possess ;  
Ev’n purgatory itself to thee’s a jest ;  
Emblem of hell, nursery of vice,  
Thou crawling university of lice. ” — TOM BROWN.

“ The Poor-Law Commissioners, at least the Assistant-Commissioners, had wanted the Union workhouses to be what the petitioners proclaimed and deplored that they were—*prisons*. He held in his hand an extract of the report of an Assistant-Commissioner, which was as follows :—‘ To the old, restraint is so little of a hardship, and the quiet and excellent accommodation of these new workhouses is so congenial to their time of life, that I much fear lest they should become attractive, when experience has shown that they are not so comfortless as described. At present, their *prisonlike appearance*, and the notion that they are intended to torment the poor, inspired a salutary terror. ’ ” — *The Bishop of Exeter in the House of Lords*, July 25, 1839.

“ I was in the *Bastile* a day or two after the poor people were brought there ; and their wretchedness was really lamentable, the building was so damp and cold. I am told, that even now the damp runs down the walls, and drops on their faces as they lie in bed. ” — *Leicestershire Correspondent to the “ Champion ”* of Feb. 16, 1840.

“ James Hopewell, a pauper, aged 74, who died in the streets of Warrington, in consequence of being removed, while ill, by an overseer, when previously asked by Mr. Longshaw, the overseer of Lymn, to go into the Union workhouse at Knutsford, replied, saying, that when he was last there he was covered with vermin. The coroner, at his inquest, inquired whether it was really true that the new Union-house was in the filthy state described. Mr. Jones, the deputy-constable of Warrington, said, from inquiries he had made, he believed that it was truth. ” — “ *Chester Paper*, ” Oct. 19, 1839.

“ He had been to Macclesfield. The

workhouse wall there was formerly six or seven feet high ; it was now twenty feet, topped with broken glass. There was formerly a large gate, now there was a little door, with a porter, by way of gaoler. ” — *Mr. R. J. Richardson (of Salford), at the Stockport Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, Feb. 1, 1839.

“ They might call the places of their confinement Union workhouses, but in his opinion they were the *worst of prisons*. ” — *Earl Stanhope, House of Lords*, March, 26, 1838.

“ They were prepared on all occasions to declare, that the Bastile, under the operations of the New Law, is not a place of rest for the weary, worn-out, life-destroyed operative ; but as a House of Correction, and a place of punishment. ” — *Mr. Peter Bussey, Bradford Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, Dec. 13, 1837.

“ The plan of the Bastile is for ‘ separation ; ’ men on one side, women on the other, and children in another division. The children and parents in this establishment will not even eat together. I observed the two ‘ dead-houses ’ as usual, and close to each of these the horrible ‘ black-holes. ’ The ‘ devil-kings ’ never forget these, their hell-begotten twins. ” — *Oastler’s Description of a Union Workhouse in Flintshire*, Oct. 12, 1838.

“ At Hellingley, a little village near Eastbourne, and 20 miles from Brighton, stands the Bastile of the Hailsham Union (a Union comprising 11 parishes), literally crammed with poor wretches, whom misrule and bad government have compelled to take up their abode therein. It is surrounded with high walls and workshops ; the walls surmounted with cast-iron *chevaux-de-frise*, to prevent the possibility of egress or ingress, by any other way than the front door. The walls also inclose a

yard, in which the inmates (about 300) take exercise. The building is white-washed outside to give it an appearance of comfort—emblematical of the ‘painted sepulchre.’ Such is a brief description of the exterior of this Whig starvation-palace. The interior baffles description. Some time ago, on the site of the present building, stood a neat, homely-looking house, the appearance of which, surrounded by a nice garden, carefully cultivated, was neat and cleanly. During the long summer evenings, on a bench outside the door, generally sat about 16 old men and women, chatting over the events of bygone days, looking as healthy and cheerful as possible; after which one of them would read a chapter from the Scriptures; and then they would retire to bed, and never laid their heads on their pillows without first returning thanks to the Almighty for his great goodness in influencing the hearts and minds of good men for providing so comfortable a receptacle for them in their old age. But now, to see the sunken eyes and hollow cheeks of the half-fed, poor creatures in this horrible place, makes one’s blood boil with indignation as they pass in their degraded ‘pepper and salt.’—*Correspondent to the “Dispatch,”* March 18, 1838.

“The workhouses are not all, but some of them are so constructed, that there is not a window—I declare to you, not a window by which the poor can look out upon the country; and one of the labourers I saw asked me, ‘if I did not think it hard, that the poor should be shut up, so as not to see a green twig of the country they have been tilling all their lives.’—*Extract of a Letter from Mr. John Perceval, to Mr. Oastler, dated Feb. 18, 1838.*

“About a quarter-of-a-mile from the village of Herne, on the road from Canterbury to Herne-bay, stands a horrible instance of the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill. It is a newly-erected building, forming a square, and covering an acre of ground, and on the sides not a single window or air-hole has been constructed to allow its unfortunate inmates the least glimpse of the surrounding country, and nothing is to be seen but dead walls. The place has the appearance of nothing else but a *prison*, which indeed it is, and that a very gloomy one, and seems fit for nothing but the reception of felons. Yet this horrible place is the new workhouse of the Herne Union; comprising 16

parishes, and erected under the provisions of the New Poor-Law! This workhouse is divided into a great number of cells, in each of which are four iron bedsteads, each destined to receive four unfortunate paupers, so that sixteen human beings are packed in every cell. Of course the women are to be kept separate. It is said that an agent of the Government specially superintended the erection of the building and its interior arrangements.”—*“Times,”* Feb., 1839.

“A great Whig introduced him to Bedford New Poor-house, which could not be distinguished from a *gaol*. The dress, discipline, and feeling were all of the *prison order*. In passing its several wards and rooms, the turnkey turned the key and locked every door after him and his visitors.”—*Correspondent quoted by Mr. Oastler in his Letter in the “Northern Star,”* Oct. 29, 1838.

“He believed the poor man had a right to relief without being compelled to go into *gaol*, for such he considered the Union workhouse.”—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons, August 8, 1839.*

“At the time of passing the Poor-Law Bill, the Bishop of Exeter expressed himself very strongly against the bastardy clauses, and some other parts of that measure, in opposition to the well-known views of the Duke of Wellington. The new workhouse scheme his Lordship described as something like the *Inferno* of Dante, on whose gate is the inscription, ‘*Who enters here leaves hope behind!*’”—*“Church Magazine,”* Nov., 1839.

“The Ex-Chancellor has converted poor-houses into *Bastiles*.”—*“Church of England Quarterly Review,”* April, 1837.

“That which excited me to come forward (against the New Poor-Law) was the sight of Dover Union House, where there was not a window in the wards of the poor to the country. This workhouse is closed in upon itself; the walls were merely *white-washed brick*, and wringing with damp, and a foul smell from the privies.....Many old people had to climb also steep steps to their bed-rooms; and little girls and urchins were shut up and playing about with big girls and fellows of 15 or 16. There are other *prisons* of the same construction near Herne Bay, &c.”—*Extract of a Letter from Mr. John Perceval to the Author, dated Kensington, August 13, 1840.*

“In the First and Second Reports of



the New Poor-Law Commissioners there are certain plans of workhouses recommended by the Commissioners to the various Boards of Guardians; and there are certain places of punishment provided, called 'Refractory Wards,' each being placed beside, and adjoining to, a 'dead-house;' in which wards, or black-holes, rendered more terrible by their being next to the 'dead-house,' the paupers of various Union workhouses are unlawfully 'punished' *without conviction* of any crime, and at the arbitrary discretion of masters of workhouses, acting under the authority of the Poor-Law Commissioners."—*The Rev. G. S. Bull's Petition to the House of Lords*, May 30, 1838, and *First Report of Commissioners*. Appendix A., p. 61, Rule 27.

"The Union workhouses are systematically *prisons in effect*, there can therefore be no need of 'a prison within a prison,' so far as safe custody is concerned."—*Ibid.*

"By the Whig system the cottage is superseded by the workhouse, from which the desolate inmates are allowed no egress, and by windows above reach, are debarred even the sight of the earth beneath."—*"Blackwood,"* April, 1837.

"I have to request that your lordship will go with me into the '*Bastiles*,' in order to 'test' the *comforts* of the poor in those establishments. *Here*, the men are kept by themselves, the women by themselves, and the children by themselves. And if, perchance, the *den* should not be large enough to contain all the paupers of the 'Union,' the children, or perhaps the women, are at some other place some *ten* miles off, where they *enjoy* (?) the most perfect retirement. But should the *den* contain them all, the greatest precautions are used for keeping them apart from each other, lest, by their being permitted to see each other, the kindly feelings of their nature might cause them to forget, for the moment, that they were paupers; and, by the exchange of the sympathy of the husband and wife, the parent and child, they should feel relieved from that 'irksomeness,' which my Lord John Russell declares to be necessary to carry the object of the Bill into effect, namely, the rendering the receipt of relief as 'irksome' as possible. To this end, very high and massive stone walls are erected, so as to render it impossible that any, even the slightest, communication from one to the other can take place. And, my Lord, be pleased to observe, that deserving and

undeserving, the virtuous as well as the vicious, are here placed on the same footing, and treated in the same way, precisely, in every respect; which is a decided improvement (!) over the old system, as it saves all the trouble of ascertaining whether the 'inmate' had formerly been respectable, and had, by a series of unfortunate circumstances (over which he or she had no control) been reduced to poverty, in which case the overseers were in the habit of allowing certain little comforts, so as to render the lives of such as comfortable as the circumstances of the case and place would admit of;—an expense which is now wisely and whiggishly saved.".....—*Anti-Malthusian Bloodsucker's* (excellent) "*Letter to Lord Brougham*," in the "*Manchester Advertiser*" of Sept. 19, 1840.

"I find entries in the Union's *Relief and Application Book*—'Mary So-and-So, to be reduced 1s. per week, or to be ordered to *Bedlington workhouse*.' It appears that this workhouse is made a place of punishment, a sort of *earthly hell*, by the Guardians, to send their miserable victims to. What a horrid system!"—*Blakey's "Controversial Letters with the Morpeth Board."*

"That the workhouses are *prisons*, I think no one will deny. Independently of the separation, the paupers are not allowed to go out, under any circumstances, without special leave, which is next to impossible, in many instances, to obtain. By a refinement in cruelty and oppression, unknown to savages, it is *felony* to leave the workhouse *without* leave, with the clothing of the Union, notwithstanding a more valuable suit may have been stripped off the person on his entering the Bastile. .... Can anything be devised that would render them more completely *prisoners* than are the paupers under such regulations and laws? They are *slaves*, my Lord, and nothing less. They must not go out *without* leave. They cannot obtain leave. They must not go out *without* leave with the clothing of the Union on; they cannot get their own. Hence they are *prisoners* in the most extensive sense of the word. They may, it is true, avoid the punishment of the New Poor-Law authorities, by going out of the 'house' as they came into the world—*naked*. Such a course would not subject them to a charge of *felony*; but then the police would seize them, and convey them to gaol, and they would be punished for mis-

demeanor. Hence they are *slaves*; *slaves* such as the world never produced before! My Lord, I blush to be an Englishman!—*Anti-Malthusian Bloodsucker's "Letter to Lord Brougham."*

"Let the productive and humble classes of society remember that this law is intended in practice (though not admitted, perhaps, in theory) to take away the '*rights of the poor to relief*,' and in its stead to mock them by the offer of the 'test' workhouse, made worse than many prisons."—*Day's "Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law."*

"Having resided in the neighbourhood ever since that Union (*the Sevenoaks*) had been formed, he could not be ignorant of what had taken place. He had learned much, and had been informed by one of the Guardians himself, that though he did not choose to disclose all the secrets of the prison-house, yet the agony of grief he had felt from the distress and cruelty he had on one occasion observed, caused him to express a wish that he himself might be removed from the world, and indeed almost caused him to express a determination to commit suicide."—*Earl Stanhope, House of Lords, March 19, 1838.*

"It is by this time pretty generally understood that these 'test workhouses' are not to be regulated by the Guardians of the different localities, who know something of the character of the various applicants, and who would generally endeavour to make such workhouses as little irksome and uncomfortable as possible to the aged, industrious, and deserving, but unfortunate, worn-out poor. Oh, no! These houses are to be governed by cold-hearted, calculating, and belly-grinding regulations, issuing from Somerset-house to all parts of the kingdom, from two or three men specially hired and well paid to make them as irksome as possible—men who, I will prove from communications, as well as from our personal interviews with them, are perfect theorists in matters connected with Poor-Law management, and have as little real practical experience upon the subject as the Emperor of Russia. But in reference to these *prison-workhouses*—upon the applicant being admitted, he will be stripped and put into the particular livery used for the inmates—if with a family, the ties of nature will be torn asunder by separations—the husband being put into one house or place, the wife in another, and the children in a third; they will then be put upon a certain fixed dietary—the quantity of food (I mean when

regulated by the Commissioners), being frequently totally insufficient for nature; nor will a friend, who would be kind, and occasionally give a little food, tea, sugar, or any trifling article, such as snuff, or tobacco, be permitted to do so; neither can they see such friends or relatives except in the presence and by permission of the master; nor will they be permitted to go out either on Sundays or week-days—no, not even to attend religious worship. Thus, although it has been said, and is true, that they can give three hours' notice to leave the house for good, can it be doubted but that this is perfect and perpetual imprisonment to those who, from age, are totally incapable of getting their living—they can never get out until carried to their graves."—*Day's "Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law."*

"Great complaints are made against those who designate the Union-Houses 'Bastiles.' For myself, I know of no more appropriate title. So far as the term applies to a prison, I see no just cause for complaint, unless it can be shown that the Union-Houses are *not* prisons which I maintain they *are*. The object of the bill being to make the receipt of relief as 'irksome' as possible, will account for the conversion of workhouses into prisons; because, if the paupers were allowed to go out to see their friends (if they have any), or their friends were allowed to go in and see them, there would be an end at once of that 'irkfulness' which is supposed to attach itself to prison discipline. I know in some instances, and no doubt they are numerous, that it is far more difficult to obtain an interview with a *pauper* relative in a workhouse, than if he were a *felon* in gaol or on board the hulks; and when a pauper is permitted to see a friend or relative, it is always in company with a spy!"—*Anti-Malthusian Bloodsucker's "Letter to Lord Brougham."*

"The grand object is to have a *central Poor-House*, for the sole purpose of coercing and punishing the poor, and breaking down one of the most valuable and strongest feelings of social life, that of a *love of home*. This House will doubtless be built according to the 'Reform' or 'liberal' style of architecture; with high walls to prevent the wretched inmates from ever seeing the light of heaven, and furnished for its internal decorations with all the necessary conveniences for torture and humiliation. When the working man meets with a misfortune, and has to apply



for temporary parochial relief, this must be his dwelling. His furniture must first be sold—he must have no home; he must then exchange his own clothes for a workhouse dress; his wife must be separated from him, and his children from both; and when an interview between the family takes place, it must be through the means of an order from head-quarters.”—*Blakey's “Letters.”*

“The workhouses were dens of torture and murder.”—*Mr. Fielden's Speech, 1838.*

“Transporting the decrepid and helpless poor from their villages into a workhouse, perhaps 10 miles off, and thus tearing them from all familiar things, and consigning them to a dreary imprisonment for life in that which may be a *pest-house*, is a more severe and terrific punishment than the law has hitherto provided for most of the enormous offences which ravage society.”—*Mr. Bowen's (of Bridgewater), “Letter to Mr. Walter,” Feb. 19, 1838.*

“Another principle of the Bill which would not admit of amendment and called for nothing less than a total repeal, was what had been truly called the pivot on which the whole turned—the workhouse system,—that system which, for the first time in the history of the world, and in this country, calling itself civilized and enlightened, and boasting of its free institutions, punished poverty as a crime, and immured in prisons those who solicited relief. He had been told in the House of Lords, that he was wrong in giving to the new workhouses the names of prisons, and that the proper description was asylums; as if Newgate was an asylum for criminals, and the Fleet prison an asylum for debtors!”—*Earl Stanhope, Freemasons' Tavern, Feb. 19, 1838.*

“I have no objection to a ‘House’ for such as those who were formerly compelled to enter one, when they are treated as human beings, having the same flesh and blood as myself; but to build large workhouses, or *poverty prisons*, and make them, like our other prisons, an alarm and terror to the people, cannot be founded either on the principles of philanthropy or Christianity; however softly, in words, the promoters may talk of ‘mercy,’ ‘justice,’ ‘morality,’ ‘good order,’ or national prosperity.”—*Roworth's “Observations on the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham.”* Published Nov., 1840.

“Great workhouses have long been declared to be great evils. To increase,

then, this dreadful evil, and distress the poor as much as possible, enormous workhouses, inquisition dens, or *Clamming-Houses* (slaughterhouses), gloomy as the most dismal prisons, and large enough to contain all the paupers of the whole Union, were ordered to be provided, at enormous expense, in each. It has often been remarked, that *poverty* brings people acquainted with *strange* bed-fellows—and so it does in these prison-houses, for ‘those meet there—peers and paupers—who never met before,’ the latter far from home, far from friends,—they seem, indeed, brought like the devoted cattle to the *Clamming-House*, each remaining, pining, till their turn shall come to die, and, perhaps, to be cut up by order of the former.”—*Samuel Roberts's, “The Peers, The People, and The Poor.”*

“Suppose for a moment that in a highly populous and civilized country they could control and manage the pauper population by shutting them up in prisons, it was contrary to the dictates of human nature, and to all the circumstances of civilized society, to do so. That they must be in prison was the necessary consequence of the present system, and then they should have a discipline of some sort established. It was impossible to immure persons in a single building without immediately enacting a discipline which, as far as they were concerned, had every circumstance of the disgrace of a prison without the conscious degradation of deserving such. What then, he would ask, had they obtained by taking the population of England, and immuring them in a building which had all the characteristics of a prison, and submitting them to treatment which they could only extend to criminals? They were approaching to their *maximum* of expense, and they had a discontented population.”—*Mr. B. D'Israeli's Speech, House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1841.*

“Mr. John Frood, Master of the Workhouse at Sherborne, examined:—‘I acted for the Governor of the Bridgewater Workhouse while he was ill.’ ‘Did Mr. King ever caution you about going into the wards?’ ‘No; he did not.’ ‘Did he tell you it was highly infectious and dangerous to go into the wards?’ ‘Yes, he did, certainly.’ ‘Did you ever know people so bad with it in their beds that the men have been lying in their own mess, that they have made pools of their own fæces in the beds?’ ‘They have been lying in that state no doubt.’ ‘How many people do you suppose were at any time in this

state from diarrhœa?' 'I do not know; there may have been ten or a dozen.' 'There was no person appointed to sit up with the old people?' 'No.' 'Then those persons must have lain in their filth, if they happened to have evacuations early in the night, till the next morning?' 'Yes.' 'When it was in this state, and the men were lying in their fœces, did you describe the horrible state of the House to the visiting committee?' 'The doctor knew it, the visiting committee knew it from the doctor, and they knew it from being there.'—*The Bridgewater Case.*

"Let them not see the aged, infirm, and afflicted poor, in whom lengthened years had strengthened the ties of kindred, torn in the days of sorrow, sickness, and poverty,—the wife from the husband, and the parent from the child—and immured for life in Union workhouses. How many artisans, as they well knew, were unable, out of their precarious earnings, to lay by a fund for the winter of their life! And these men would be carried in their old age, to what he might term a *prison*, the Union workhouse; there torn from family, children, and every tie that can soothe distress, they must lie immured: and if to relieve the weary monotony of sorrow they looked through their window to the country around, what would meet their view? their grave; yes, their grave; for by this Bill to every Union workhouse must be attached a burying-ground. Who among them did not know what the poor of England felt, in seeing the objects endeared by thousands of past remembrances, which surrounded their humble dwellings? And instead of this they were to have now—their graves! Who did not know the attachment of the English poor to the hallowed ground in which the remains of their fathers lay? Now that spot should be no longer known; in the simple words, 'my father died in the workhouse,' would be comprised one mass of buried poor, among whom distinction by surviving relatives would be impossible."—*G. Goldney, Esq. (Deputy-Governor of St. Peter's Hospital, Bristol), Anti-Poor-Law Meeting, Feb. 11, 1841.*

"The workhouse was like the *Inferno* of Dante, and might very properly have inscribed over it the words—'Whoever enters here leaves hope behind!'"—*Bishop of Exeter, House of Lords, July 28, 1834.*

"The hon. member for Lambeth had found fault with his (Mr. Duncombe's)

hon. colleague for describing the Union workhouses as places of torture. That they were so in many instances could not be denied. The hon. member had quoted the case of Richmond, in Surrey. He (Mr. Duncombe) would give him the case of another Richmond, which had reached him that morning from Yorkshire. (Hear, hear.) The case was that of Thomas Stevenson, the Governor of the Richmond Union workhouse, in Yorkshire, who had been brought up before the magistrates, charged upon the oath of Sarah Price with having assaulted and ill-used her. Mr. Charles Hammond, Clerk of the Union, alleged that what Stevenson had done had been justified by the rules and regulations of the Commissioners for the management and discipline of the workhouse, and also by order of the Board of Guardians. Messrs. Stevenson and Hammond not having made out a case of justification to the satisfaction of the magistrates, they fined the defendant 20s. (A cry of 'read.') The magistrates said, 'That they could not refrain from expressing their opinion that the defendant had not conducted himself upon this occasion in such a manner as he ought to have done; that he ought not to have visited the room of a female inmate after she had retired to rest for the night, that being the special duty of the matron. Neither ought he to have used the indelicate threat of taking the complainant for punishment down to the cell below, naked as she then was. He ought not to have confined the complainant to a cell, nor to have altered her diet to bread and water, without the order of the Guardians. He had not exercised a sound discretion in beating children, and particularly the child at the complainant's breast, as proved by the defendant's own witnesses.' Was not this then the description of a place of torture? And how could they expect the poor to enter such places, and expose themselves to such treatment? Was it any satisfaction to that poor woman or her child to be told that the Master of the workhouse had been fined 20s.? He did not believe that, under the old system, anything half so bad or half so cruel ever existed; and it was a disgrace to the country that a system under which such cruelties had been perpetrated should still find advocates in that House. (Hear, hear.) The powers of the Commissioners were not only arbitrary and despotic, but they had been frequently abused, and they were of little or



no use to the country. Let the Committee recollect the case stated by the hon. member for Bridgewater; where was the use of a central Board there? Dysentery prevailed in the house; the Guardians wished to give the inmates rice-milk instead of water-gruel. They could not do so. They sent up to the Commissioners to get their permission in the month of October, but they received no answer until April; and what was the result? Fifty of the poor inmates died in consequence. (Hear, hear.) This was the sort of place into which the noble lord (J. Russell) would recommend the poor to go when out of work; this was the provision the poor were expected to be grateful for!"—*Mr. T. S. Duncombe, House of Commons, March 22, 1841.*

"It is very apparent, from the discussions which it occasioned, that the Poor-Laws, in their mode of administration, have not been so beneficial or successful as is usually believed. No doubt the new system is a great improvement on the old, which directly encouraged pauperism amongst the able-bodied labouring classes. A great saving in the gross expense has been realized; able-bodied idlers are no longer pampered at the public expense; but there is an austerity in regard to infirm and aged paupers, against which humanity revolts. This proceeds mainly from the little discretion which the Guardians are allowed to exercise in the domestic arrangements of the poor-house. The Commissioners, from not coming in contact with poverty, as it too often exhibits itself in the workhouse, permit no exception to the general rules, and the consequence is, that in place of being an asylum for the destitute, where they may drag out their remaining years without

the pangs of hunger and the pains of nakedness, it is really an aggravation of their wretchedness. Medical officers, too, are frequently interfered with in administering relief, and the rage for economy seems to dry up all access to compassion. Poverty, in place of being looked upon as a misfortune, is punished as a crime; and until the Poor-Laws are practically administered on the basis of humanity and sympathy, they will meet with opposition, and produce discontent. The remedy for this is to place a judicious discretion in the hands of the Guardians, who would modify the general regulations to suit the wants of the locality, and to grant such little immunities and privileges to individuals as circumstances rendered advisable. Without going the length of Oastler and several others, we cannot but admit that the workhouse has not been inaptly styled a 'Bastile,' and that the aged and infirm are not only rigorously confined, but precluded from the most sparing intercourse with their relatives. Now, all that we contend for could be obtained without adding to the expenses of the Union, or ministering to luxury, and so paving the way for an increase of paupers. The pauper certainly should not be surrounded with comforts so as to render the workhouse attractive, but it should not, at the same time, be so repulsive as to render life miserable, and existence an utter blank of mental and physical enjoyment. There is plenty of room for ameliorating the present system without opening the door for burdensome abuse, and we hope the amendments to be sanctioned by Parliament will have the effect."—*Port of Tyne Pilot, March 26, 1841. (A Provincial New Poor-Law Print.)*

# THE FRIENDS AND FAVOURERS OF THE NEW POOR-LAW

THEIR SAYINGS AND DOINGS, AND NOBLE SELVES.

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*Falstaff*—"Lord! Lord! how this world is given to lying!"—HENRY IV.

*Pistol*—"Have we not Hiren here?"—HENRY IV.

"Some noble Lords are not in *their places*."—STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

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"Most certain it is, that anything more mischievous, anything more fatal, to the country, cannot be conceived, than any regular and fixed provision for the poor."

—*Lord Brougham, when introducing the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, July 21, 1834.*

"The King has not the power to control the Poor-Law Commissioners."—*Mr. Commissioner Power, at Bury, 1836.*

"The destruction of all property stares us, and at no great distance, in the face. .... All property is shaken to pieces, and the times are fast approaching when it shall be no more ..... I certainly very soon may be a Westmoreland pauper if the present system (the old Poor-Law,) continues."—*Lord Brougham, July 21, 1834.*

"When the New Poor-Law first came into the Blything Union, complaints were made to me by able-bodied labourers that the food was not sufficient; the answer I gave them was, that if they had not sufficient food they would naturally reduce in weight, and therefore I should test the fact by having them weighed; and from that day to the present hour I have had no complaint of any description."—*Lord Stradbroke's Evidence before the Select Committee of the Lords, in 1838, Part I., p. 492.*

"Mr. Bucke thought 'the new law had a beneficial effect.'"—*Parliamentary Debate, July 15, 1839.*

"Mr. Philip Howard (M.P. for Carlisle) thought 'that few acts of Parliament had been attended with more beneficial results.'"—*Ibid.*

"Mr. Pakington (M.P. for Droitwich) believed, 'that if there was any one act of the present ministry to which posterity would look back upon with pleasure, it was the Poor-Law Amendment-Act.'"—*Ibid.*

"Mr. Mark Philips (M.P. for Manchester) said 'that the labourers were more comfortable, better paid, and in every respect better than they were before the passing of the Act.'"—*Ibid.*

"The Bishop of Chichester said, 'when there were no fewer than 20,000 clergymen of the Established Church, and a larger number belonging to different denominations, his surprise was that so few cases had been brought forward of interference in reference to this question (the New Poor-Law). It was a matter of gratulation with him, as well as surprise, that they had entered so little into this question; and he could state that they had received the law with feelings of true loyalty, and with the full determination of fully co-operating in carrying it into effect.'"—*March 19, 1838.*

"Earl Radnor said, 'he could prove that certain Boards of Guardians had applied to the Commissioners to have the dietary reduced: it was so rich and full (?) that it had caused fever and apoplexy amongst the paupers.'"—*House of Lords, June 23, 1838.*

"Mr. Hume 'thought the Bastardy Clause a wise enactment; and by several returns in his possession, he was led to conceive it to be one of the best parts of the Bill.'"—*Debate, Nov. 27, 1837.*

"Mr. Baines thought 'great benefit would accrue from the measure to every part of the community.'"—*Ibid.*

"I would recommend to the Commissioners, as a general rule, that not only should not the inmates of a workhouse be allowed to go out on Sunday, but that they should not be allowed to go out at all.'"—*Lord Melbourne, House of Lords.*

"The country has been relieved by the introduction of the Act from a direct annual taxation of nearly two millions, three hundred thousand pounds sterling; and pauperism has diminished in proportion, and the moral tone (?) of the working classes has been raised to an equal degree."—*Bulwer in the "Monthly Chronicle," Nov., 1838.*

"The effects of the law are not only a saving of £4,000,000 to the rate-payers, but an improvement in the character of the



labourers.”—*Lord John Russell, House of Commons*, Nov. 27, 1837.

“I find peers of the blood walking up and down the Poor-Law Bastiles of this country, looking into every kettle and every crib—not to see whether the kettle may be empty that they may fill it, but to see whether there be anything in the kettle that they may filch out of it; not to see whether the cabin be comfortable, that they may increase its accommodation, but to see whether there be two blankets, or one and a rag, that they may leave the rag and take the last blanket that is remaining. I find peers of the realm, the highest of them, your Fitzwilliams, and your Broughams, and your Radnors, and all the rest of the same class,—I find these men with the scales in their hands, weighing the ounces of bread and measuring the drops of water, that they may steal away even the crumbs, at the expense of the lives of those whom God has made in his own image.”—*Rev. J. R. Stephens's Sermon*, Feb. 10, 1839.

“It was singular to say, that not one real case of grievance against the law had been substantiated.”—*Lord Wharnccliffe, House of Lords*, March 26, 1838.

“David Norman, aged 75. Has a wife aged 83. He is past work, and is allowed one stone of flour, and used to have 2s. 6d. a-week; but the Earl of Stradbroke being chairman, struck off 3d. He pays 1s. per week rent.”—*Suffolk Correspondent to the "Champion"*, Dec. 1, 1839.

“His own opinion was, that the excitement which had been got up in the North was altogether artificial; and that the persons concerned in endeavouring to excite a feeling of hostility to the New Poor-Law Act, did not, altogether, amount to a dozen, hardly one of whom was respectable in point of circumstances, and but few in point of intelligence.”—*Lord John Russell, House of Commons*, Feb. 20, 1838.

“The expenditure of Poor-Rates HAS decreased twelve per cent. in Lincolnshire, nine in Shropshire, eight in Herefordshire, seven in Cambridgeshire and Westmoreland; in Kent and Monmouthshire, six; in Norfolk, Suffolk, and the North Riding of Yorkshire, five.”—*Commissioners' "Canterbury Tales," just published*.

“Lord Howick laughed at the petitions for the repeal of the New Poor-Law, because the people did not burn and kill, as at the times of the Reform Bill.”—*Vide Debate in the House of Commons*, Feb. 20, 1838.

“Lord Brougham affects to sympathize deeply for the Negro slaves, the while he revels in the contemplation of the woes his barbarous edict, the New Poor-Law, has entailed upon his poorer countrymen.”—*G. R. W. B.*

“Professing—as I sincerely feel—the utmost reverence for religious observances, I must frankly own that I cannot regard the conduct of those Bishops who support the inhuman bill, without disgust. These Right Reverend Fathers in God, who solemnize the marriage ceremony, and who declare it to be binding for life, now sanction an Act which cruelly annuls it. In their clerical capacity they marry those whom, as legislators, they unmarry.”—*“Moraviensis” in the "Weekly Dispatch,"* April 29, 1838.

“I was in your Lordship's House not long ago, and there I heard one noble Lord after another rise up in his place, and solemnly assure their Lordships, ‘that the agricultural labourers are delighted with the effects of the New Poor-Law; that they were very much improved in their condition, circumstances, and behaviour; that instead of being idle, insolent, and ungovernable and ungrateful, they were now industrious, and respectful, and obedient, and thankful.’ Ah, my Lord, whilst I listened, I knew that these noble Lords were speaking ‘peace, peace, where there was no peace!’” —*Oastler's "Letter to Lord Fitzwilliam,"* June 2, 1838.

“It always appears to me that poor laws endeavour to rob the Supreme Governor of the universe of some of his attributes, their object being to overturn the decree promulgated immediately after the fall ‘in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.’” —*Earl Fitzwilliam, on the Second Reading of the Irish Poor-Law Bill*.

“Politics had nothing to do with religion; and it was rank blasphemy to quote Scripture against the Poor-Law Amendment-Act.”—*Lord Brougham*.

“Any improvement in the Poor-Laws, which had been effected in England, was merely a step towards having no Poor-Law at all; and that was the wise view to take of it.”—*Earl Fitzwilliam*.

“The people are all happy, and all delighted with the bill, except the dozen agitators, and the few idle, lazy, dissolute villains, who oppose the New Poor-Law.” —*Radnor, Russell, Richmond, Brougham, Fitzwilliam, and Co.*

“By this Act of Hell, not only are all the villains of the kingdom afforded an

opportunity of coming forth and gaining profitable places, but all the weak and wavering are tempted to become as bad as the rest; while the few who are proof against the price of fratricide, are injured and persecuted to the utmost of the power of the God-defying country-destroyers. I will instance the Editors of public newspapers, nine-twentieths of whom have probably sold themselves for filthy lucre's sake, to promote, to the utmost of their power, this work of the devil and all his agents; for which they are daily or weekly clearing by advertisements of Unions, &c., from, perhaps, five pounds to fifty."—*Mr. Samuel Roberts's pamphlet of "Mary Wilden, a Victim of the New Poor-Law."*

"To 'test' Englishmen, before they should be allowed to eat! And to 'test' them how, think ye? By imprisonment! Why, an Englishman, in former days, would have taken up a club, and knocked the man down, who had dared to hint at such a 'test.' This is not all: he is to be 'tested'—*cursed word*—he, an Englishman, willing to work, but unable to obtain employment, he is *now* ordered to be 'tested,' when hungry, by a set of idle, voluptuous spendthrifts, who themselves, this very day, will have their tables garnished by grimcrack pyramids and temples, made of sugar, and other sweetmeats, which will cost £40 or £50, and which are never intended to be eaten, but are only for ornament; and when the repast is ended, and the 'aristocrats' are half-intoxicated, to be broken to pieces in a frolic—for amusement!"—*Oastler's "Right of the Poor to Liberty and Life."*

"Lord Brougham declared in the House of Lords, that separation was never intended; that no man in his senses would ever dream of such cruelty, as separating man and wife: there is nothing about separation in the Act. True, all true. The Commissioners are not 'men in their senses;' they are either madmen or fiends. They have 'ordered' separation, although the law allows it not!"—*Ibid.*

"These well-paid Commissioners take care, in the most cowardly manner, to keep out of the way; and even in those districts, where the law (*they* say) 'works well,' I know for a fact, that when the Poor-Law Commissioners get into their carriages, they are so afraid of the revenge of the people, that they say to the post-boy, '*If any person asks you who we are don't tell them.*'"—*Ibid.*

"I owe the Commissioners no allegiance. If Parliament cannot make laws,

but are become so imbecile, that they must transfer their power, then, between them and myself, the contract is ended. They have no right to transfer the people either to the control of three Commissioners, three angels, or three devils. No, no; their power ceases, when they discover their own incompetency to legislate."—*Ibid.*

"It is the devil's own spawn, begotten by him, when in a very bad humour. Lord Brougham is its mother; Joe Hume was man-midwife; Lord Althorp was its wet-nurse; the Bishop of London baptized it; the Duke of Wellington and Daniel O'Connell were its sponsors; Sir Robert Peel acted as registering-clerk; and the Bishops of Norwich and Ely have since confirmed it. May the Bishop of Exeter, and good parson Maberley, both live to see it destroyed, and both refuse to give its ashes Christian burial."—*Oastler's Speech at Huddersfield, Jan. 14, 1837.*

"The amendment of the Poor-Laws forms one of the proudest measures of the Whigs; and it has, on that very account, been assailed with misrepresentations and calumnies of almost unprecedented falsity and malignity."—*Edinburgh Review, April, 1838.*

"The poor were labouring under dyspepsia, arising from over-feeding."—*Earl Radnor, June, 1838.*

"THE WORDS OF A NEW POOR-LAW FUNCTIONARY.—His parents were of very low degree, just above pauperism. The New Poor-Law son, having become prosperous, was counselled by a friend to send a trifle, say £50, to his poor parents. He is said to have refused; nay, more, to have declined a succour even of £10 or £5. On being sharply remonstrated with, and reminded of his obligations, he answered, 'Why, what have they done for me—they begot me—they could not help that!'"—*Blackwood's Magazine, April, 1838.*

"The Commissioners—"His belief was, and every conversation he had with them he was the more thoroughly convinced, that they understood fully the nature of the duty imposed upon them—that they wished to perform that duty with the most humane feeling; and that no assistance which others might give them, could more effectually enable them to discharge that duty well, than their own intelligence and humanity," (hear! hear!)—*Lord John Russell, House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

"By Mr. Walter.—Q 'You say, the



clamour raised against this wholesome regulation, that is, of separating man and wife, has been entirely silenced *by argument*, except when kept up for factious purposes: will you be so good as to tell the committee what that argument was that silenced the clamour?—A. ‘*The impossibility of conducting the government of the workhouses where the sexes were not separated!!!*’—W. H. T. Hawley, Esq., Assistant-Commissioner before the Poor-law Committee in the House of Commons, March, 1837.

“Oh! how my heart did bleed when I read it—whilst they go, court, and cabinet, and councillors of state, and the attendants of royalty—whilst they flutter, butterflylike, around her who ought to be a pillar of strength to the poor, as well as a pillar of glory to the great and rich—how my heart bled when I read that these courtly attendants were conducting the Queen through the streets of London to the Royal theatre—and for what purpose? to see the wild beasts of the forest eating her children’s food!! Good God! and art thou merciful, and art thou just—merciful to those poor whose bodies are lined and pitched with resin, that the ‘skilly’ may not scour them into the cholera-morbus. Art thou merciful to those, and art thou righteous and just towards their oppressors? Dost thou look down from heaven and behold the maiden Queen of England, the nursing mother of this people, dragged to yonder dens to see the wild beasts brought from Africa because we have so much spare food here—brought over from America, from the deepest forests of the woods, the lions, the panthers, the leopards, from all the regions of the world, having rounds of beef and legs of mutton, and live rabbits, and pheasants and partridges—having all these—the choicest and richest food in the land, whilst a few yards off, in the Strand Union workhouse, more murders have been done upon the subjects of that Queen, more blood shed, more awful crime committed than ever these lions, tigers, panthers, and bears, shed, when allowed by God to roam wild in the forest. I never was so struck with the awful contrast of condition in my life. The Queen is never told that her people starve—that they pine—that they perish. She is never brought out to see the people fed!”—*Rev. J. R. Stephens’s Sermon*, 1839.

“Just hear what the Church of England commands us to do every Sunday, and much oftener:—She tells us not only to

pray for the Queen, the Bishops, the Clergy, the Nobles, the Magistrates, and ourselves, but she puts these beautiful prayers into our lips, and it is always with a hearty goodwill that they are uttered by me: ‘That it may please thee to defend, and provide for, the fatherless, children, and widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed;’ and this law commands them to be still more oppressed,—to be imprisoned, classified, and half starved to death! Again, the church leads us thus to pray—‘That it may please thee to succour, help, and comfort all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation.’ But this law commands those poor sufferers to be ‘tested’ by a greater portion of tribulation, and reduced to ‘a coarser sort of food.’ Again—‘That it may please thee to have mercy upon all men.’ If the New Poor-Law be true, mercy is a crime. How can the following prayer be uttered by a friend of the New Poor-Law?—‘That it may please thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so as in due time we may *enjoy* them.’ How can there be *enjoyment* in the *fruits of the earth*, in undeserved imprisonment, and in feeding upon a stinted portion of ‘skilly,’ in separation from friends and kindred? Pretty ‘*enjoyment*,’ indeed! Luxurious ‘*fruits of the earth*,’ with a vengeance! To all these beautiful petitions we are commanded to add, ‘We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord!’ Again, listen to the following: ‘Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness, all those who are any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate; that it may please thee to *comfort* and *relieve* them, according to their several necessities.’ How can any man, after thus addressing his Maker, hope for the blessing of God, when he supports a law, which is professedly intended to ‘test’ poverty by punishment? I fearlessly assert, that no Churchman, *who heartily joins in her services*, can support the New Poor-Law.”—*Oastler’s “Right of the Poor to Liberty and Life.”*

“As the Scriptures, according to your own declaration from the pulpit, contain an authentic and connected history of the Divine dispensation, with regard to mankind, as it was given by Divine inspiration, as its chief object is religion, and as the doctrines it teaches, and the duties it inculcates, pertain to the conduct of men as rational, moral, and accountable beings—you, as ministers, ought to support them. Do not some of you (to your disgrace) try

to excuse yourselves by saying you believe God has not joined all. But we know one thing, whether God has joined them or not, you have; and if they be your joining alone, you are the persons who are guilty. You argue again, that man and wife have no right to procreate children whom they cannot support. Allow me to say, that the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. I ask why did you not marry them *conditionally*, that if they have children and cannot keep them, they must be separated. I also ask, if that be the ground on which you separate them, pray, in the name of common sense, why did you blaspheme God so often (while you married his poor creatures), by praying that he would bless them in the procreation of children, and that they may see their children Christianly and virtuously brought up;—here you see your enactment is altogether unscriptural. Thus your folly and madness are exhibited, and also your guilt, in marrying those whom God hath not joined—thus you punish the innocent for your guilt. If you will support the system, to be consistent as men and ministers, you should make a contract with Christ, to endow you with such mental qualifications and deep penetration, by which to discover whom he intends to be joined together, and whom he does not. When you parson-guardians have made that contract, then, and never until then, will we submit to your *unmarrying* those even whom God hath not joined.”—*Rev. W. V. Jackson's Poor-Law Sermon, preached at Leigh, Feb. 18, 1838.*

“The Duke of Rutland takes an active part as Chairman of the Grantham Poor-Law Union. On one occasion when his Grace visited the workhouse, he asked some of the inmates if they were satisfied with the care taken of them. ‘No,’ said one, ‘the good’s bad.’ ‘The good’s bad!’ said the Duke, ‘what is it that is bad—the meat?’ ‘No.’ ‘The bread?’ ‘No.’ ‘The potatoes?’ ‘No; they give us no spice to our soup!’ ‘Is that all you have to complain of?’ ‘Yes.’ His Grace, it needs scarcely be added, left the workhouse perfectly satisfied.”—*Doncaster Gazette, Nov. 1837.*

“As my opponents, however, are endeavouring to excite a feeling against me on the subject of the New Poor-Law, I think it right to state, that I most cordially approve of it in *its main features*.”—*The Hon. Craven Fitzhardinge Berkeley, M.P. for Cheltenham, Address, July 22, 1837.*

“With respect to the New Poor-Law,

I believe there never was a law of similar magnitude enacted, *so free* from objection.”—*Mr. John Childers, M.P. for Malton, in the “Bradford Observer,” August 10, 1837.*

“He directed especial attention to the provisions of the New Poor-Law, and thoroughly exposed the dishonest artifice by which it had been sought, and not without success, to throw obloquy on it by those clap-trap cries which had been raised against the separation of man and wife; and observed, that the Act contained no provision whatever to that effect. If such separation had taken place by the orders of the Commissioners, let them bear the blame of it; for the chief Commissioner, Mr. Frankland Lewis, was as rank a Tory as ever breathed.”—*The Hon. J. C. Dundas, M.P. for York, in the “Morning Chronicle,” July 28, 1837.*

“I assent generally to the provisions of the New Poor-Law Act.”—*Mr. Fazakerley, M.P. for Peterborough, in the “Northampton Herald,” 1837.*

“I consider the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act *absolutely necessary* in the North of England.”—*Sir Henry Hardinge, in the “West Briton,” July 28, 1837.*

“The opposite party had unfairly attempted to excite popular feeling against the New Poor-Law. He had supported that enactment, and was willing to take upon himself *whatever unpopularity* might be occasioned by it.”—*Sir Robert Heron, M.P. for Peterborough, in the “Northampton Herald,” July 29, 1837.*

“The Poor-Law Amendment-Act appeared to me from the first a wholesome reform, rendered necessary to the great and growing evils of the parochial system. It has been administered, I should say, in our county, with *judgment, consideration, and decided success!*”—*Mr. Philip Pusey, M.P. for Berkshire, Address, July 22, 1837.*

“In reference to the Poor-Laws, some people had run away with a very absurd idea of the inhumanity of the measure. He had been reprobated in the strongest terms for saying that had he been present he should have gloried in voting for it. The fact was, he was present in the House of Commons, and did vote for it..... As to the separation of old people, he had searched the bill in vain for any passage that could be so construed. The old would still be together.”—*Sir Robert Rolfe, Solicitor-General, in the “Morning Chronicle,” July 28, 1837.*

“The Duke of Wellington, raising



himself above party views, has supported the Poor-Law Amendment-Act with a fearlessness and sincerity which have been little imitated by the mass of his party."—*Lord John Russell's Address*, July 8, 1837.

"As to the New Poor-Law Bill, it had been much modified, and differed but little from the old. The principles of the new bill were the same as formerly, only differing in the machinery. Those parties among whom it had been introduced declared their satisfaction."—*Mr. W. Stansfield, M.P. for Huddersfield, in the "Times,"* July 29, 1837.

"The Ministry have amended the Poor-Law, endeavouring to restore the independent character of the British peasant, and at the same time diminish the burden upon the farmer."—*Sir Harry Verney, M.P. for Buckingham, Address*, June 28, 1837.

"The most false and malicious statements were made by the Tories relative to the Poor-Law Bill. Were its evils solely to be placed to the account of the Whigs? Who refused any alteration in the Bill? The Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. Who adopted the recommendation of the Commissioners? The Bishop of London, the Bishop of Gloucester, and Mr. Sturges Bourne.....Many are the evils of the law, but they will be removed, because they are no part of the Bill, but the act of the Commissioners—such as that of the separation of man and wife, the denial of out-door relief, and other acts which are outrageous to the morals of society."—*Mr. Sergeant Wilde, M.P. for Newark, in the "Morning Chronicle,"* August 1, 1837.

"He considered the old practice of giving out-door relief but false humanity at the best, because it materially injured the interests of all classes in the community. As to the question—did they mean to relax the law in future?—his noble friend, the Secretary of State, meant next year to propose a measure to correct any difficulties or anomalies that had been perceived in the working of the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act, and to submit it to the House for its consideration and determination. He, therefore, hoped that the House would not at present allow what appropriately had been termed the 'fine end of the wedge' to be driven in, under pretence of a compassionate feeling for the *poor widows*."—*Lord Howick, House of Commons*, August 8, 1839.

"Mr. Attwood said, 'the noble Lord

(Howick) had got a sort of bread-and-water phobia, for he seemed to dread every extra mouthful that was given to a pauper.'"—*Ibid.*

"Though the Bill was not perfect, he thought it had worked wonders."—*Viscount Falkland, House of Lords*, March 26, 1838.

"He thought it better that poor men should struggle through their temporary difficulties, rather than throw themselves on the parish for relief."—*Viscount Melbourne. Ibid.*

"In the Grantham Union, the Duke of Rutland has proposed that *barley-bread rations* should be issued to the inmates of the house to bring them down to the living of the labourers out of doors!"—*"Kent Herald,"* August, 1840.

"I would not, for my own part, consider it a great *national* misfortune, if the House of Parliament were to take the splendid estates of the Duke of Bedford, which *originally belonged to the church*, and place them again in the hands of a religious establishment, in such a way that 500 or 600 people could enjoy the benefit. Nay, I would give a preference to this innovation, in spite of the consideration that a little sloth or indolence might be the result; or, that we should run the risk of losing the national services of such a nobleman as Lord John Russell, who is toiling night and day in calculating even to a *few drops*, how much a poor man ought to have of a beverage composed of *three pints of oatmeal to thirty pints of water*, and in fixing to a hair's breadth the thickness of the head and foot of his coffin, and the estimated cost of laying him in the grave! Yes, all these great *national* advantages I would cheerfully forego, for the pleasure of seeing 500 smiling faces regaling themselves in Woburn Park."—*Blakey's "General Principles of Parochial Relief."*

"The Bishop of Norwich said 'he had been an active Guardian himself, and had assisted in working the measure. He had visited the 'prisons,' as they were called, and had carefully inspected them; and, on all occasions on which he had done so, he had made full inquiries into the circumstances of the paupers. On a late occasion, every pauper had been separately examined; they were asked if they had any cause of complaint, and not the slightest complaint was made in any one instance.'"—*House of Lords*, March 26, 1838.

"When some of the Metropolitan

parishes petitioned the King, for the repeal of the New Poor-Law, in the autumn of 1836, Lord John Russell took care his Majesty should never see the petitions. When remonstrated with, on the subject, Mr. Phillips, his Lordship's secretary, gravely informed the petitioners, that a petition presented to the premier was considered as presented to his Majesty!"

"The doctrine of the illegality of separating man and wife had been carried too far. Some persons—he did not know whether it was the Right Rev. Prelate (Exeter) or not—maintained that it was illegal to separate them for a day, or an hour; if so, they were all acting illegally in not having their wives with them in the House of Lords. If the Right Rev. Prelate was a married man, he also was culpable in not having his wife with him."—*Earl Radnor, House of Lords, June 23, 1838.*

"The sight of a scaffold before the workhouses would be quite sufficient to drive the poor away."—*Mr. Assistant Commissioner Mott.*

"Earl Stanhope presented a petition from the parish of St. George, Southwark, complaining of misrepresentation on the part of the Poor-Law Commissioners, as to the working of the New Poor-Law in that parish."—*June 7, 1839.*

"THE COMMISSIONERS' POWERS.—In order to give this body a sufficient authority to carry into effect the remedies contemplated by the Commissioners of inquiry, it is proposed to invest it with a *subordinate* power of legislating, by means of rules and orders..... They (the Commissioners) are to make and issue rules, orders, and regulations, for the control of subordinate officers; to determine the kind and quantity of relief to be given to the various classes of poor, especially the able-bodied. They are, at their own discretion, to declare unions for the purpose of administration merely, and for appointing and paying officers; and, with the consent of Guardians, or of a majority of owners and rate-payers, to declare unions for settlement and rating. They are to make rules for the building, altering, and government of workhouses; for the education of children therein; for the guidance and control of Guardians, vestries, and parish officers; and for the appointment, by Overseers and Guardians, of such paid officers, with such qualifications as they may think necessary for the regulation of contracts; and, generally, they are to control all persons exercising

any powers in any way relating to the relief of the poor."—*M. Cullock's "Statistics of the British Empire."*

"A third main recommendation of the workhouse system was, that it withdrew from the officers, having the administration of relief, all discretionary powers."—*The 1st Report of the Poor-Law Commissioners, pp. 264—276.*

"A great deal of evidence was also produced to show that in the few instances where the principle (Poor-Law) had been applied, the result of its adoption had been found to succeed in an invariable degree; the first result being the conversion of able-bodied paupers into independent labourers, and a simultaneous reduction of the parish expenditure; the second observable result being a rise in the wages of labour; the third, a diminution of improvident marriages; and the fourth, increased content of the labourers, as their industry and the reward of their industry increased; and the fifth, a diminution of crime."—*Commissioners' 1st Report.*

"MR. HUME.—We were not surprised to find Mr. Hume among the foremost supporters of the Poor-Law Bill—a measure which certainly required the stomach of a Scotchman to swallow whole and undivided. It may be inferred from this, that he is a disciple of that school which has long been labouring to substitute a heartless selfishness for the more generous impulses of our nature. The tendency of this misnamed philosophy in substance amounts to this:—that the miseries of life result from the absence of individual prudence, and that this prudence will be best taught by abandoning the destitute to the consequences of their vices or misfortunes; thereby extinguishing all the charities which hitherto it has been the business of science and religion to inculcate, and bringing society into that primeval state, in which the predominant rule is—*Take care of yourself without any regard to any body else!* A man who thinks that social existence can be bettered by the dissemination of such a doctrine, must have a very peculiar organization himself, and have had a very limited and peculiar observance of human nature."—*Appendix to the Black Book.*

"I certainly heard one of the itinerant Poor-Law Commissioners, when developing the law and promoting the 'Unions,' boast that the New Poor-Houses would not be '*too comfortable*,' that they would be so hard to the inmates, that none, not



even the most idle, would stay in them longer than they could help, nor when they might, in any degree short of starvation, maintain themselves, that is, keep body and soul together."—*Blackwood's Magazine*, April, 1838.

"Why did not the Commissioners bring down the history of the poor and the Poor-Laws to the present time, instead of stopping at the reign of Elizabeth? Had they done so, they would have found that all their more important suggestions have been *already tried*; that the project for incorporating parishes has been tried; that the plan for refusing relief to able-bodied poor, except in a workhouse; and for attaching wages for advances previously made to paupers out of the rates. Mention may be found of all these plans and their failure and abandonment in Eden's *History of the Poor*, and Wade's *History of the Middle and Working Classes*. But a notice of them might have weakened their case, and lessened the confidence of the public in any schemes founded upon them."—*Appendix to the Black Book*.

"The Poor-Law Commission originated with, and was formed by, Lord Brougham. His Lordship, about 20 years ago, gulped down some new and abstract dogmas on the tendency of a compulsory rate for the relief of the poor, and the Commissioners were set to work to establish by evidence these old 'foregone conclusions.' They did their bidding certainly; for the zeal with which they got up criminatory matter against the poor was assuredly not exceeded by that with which the agents in Italy filled the famous 'green bag' against the unfortunate Queen Caroline."—*Ibid*.

"The Bill works well in the particular part of the country mostly under my observation."—*Duke of Wellington*, 1837.

"Lord Western (in his 70 year at the time), in the *Chelmsford Chronicle*, breaks out in a violent hysteric of rejoicing at the New Poor-Law Bill, and adds, 'No minister could build his posthumous fame upon a more solid rock.'"—*Conservative Journal*, August 5, 1837.

"The poor ought to be national property, and regulated as the army is. .... On whom did the duty of relieving the poor devolve? Certainly not on individual localities, but on the country at large. To whom did the poor devolve, but on the nation, and it ought not to be left to any locality to legislate for their

relief."—*Mr. Roebuck, House of Commons*, Feb., 1837.

"The New Poor-Law is really the house of *Want* against the house of *Have*. On one side are all who *have*, including all who have laboured for what they have; on the other, are those who *want*, and who desire to satisfy their want by taking from those who have, without equivalent. On the one side is the principle of protection to property, protection to the produce of industry, in the hands of the industrious; on the other side are the have-nothings, who seek, not liberty to earn, not power to sell their labour in the dearest market and buy food in the cheapest; but to be maintained by the people of property, to eat unearned bread at their expense. .... The agitators against the law are attacking the security of property, encouraging the indigent to prey upon the rest of society."—*Westminster Review*, Oct., 1837.

"The New Poor-Law had called private charity more into action than the old."—*Lord Ellenborough, House of Lords*, April 17, 1837.

"At the quarter-sessions held last week at Bradford, there were only two applications for orders of maintenance in Bastardy. The first was against the *master of a workhouse* in the Union whence the application came, and the second was against a *Poor-Law Guardian* in another Union!"—*Halifax Guardian*, July, 1840.

"The slaves of antiquity were cattle. Without much difficulty the sexes might be kept effectually separated. Or if, by some relaxation of this rigour, the offspring came to be more than was wanted, it was destroyed as a matter of course. .... The practice of infanticide, rendered familiar by its frequency among the slaves, was nowise shocking when applied to the other part of the population. Only being optional and not enforced, it did not reach the point we have in view, *the preventing of the existing of persons for whom there are no places*."—*Marcus on "the Possibility of Limiting Populousness,"* chap. 2.

"We will, for that reason, anticipate a future argument. And without discussing yet, which will be the best means of subjecting nature to discretion, we will imagine one found, facilitated by artful gradations, physical and moral; and finally adopted in practice, by which it may be rendered optionable to rear or not to rear; to introduce into life and citizen-

ship, or to exterminate therefrom the just-born infant."—*Ibid.*, c. 3, s. 2.

"The untimely death of elder persons seem to be convenient in this at least, that it makes room for the younger ones."—*Ibid.*, c. 3, s. 3.

"What is to be done with the lazars of Naples, or with the half-savages of Ireland—or the Ireland of France—La Vendée? Are those populations doomed to be as they are for everlasting? Any attempt to amend their condition must set out by a reduction of their numbers. This can be done only by putting them, district by district, into a state of coercion."—*Ibid.*, c. 5, s. 4.

"To save life is not to save pain, but to inflict it."—*Ibid.*, c. 5, s. 5.

"Beyond these two considerations, (of the parents' loss, and of their sympathy for the infant's pain), there is another, which goes to make up the complex idea of criminally killing. It is that of the right or property in life, inherent in the living person himself. However it may be, that with the extinction of life is extinguished the wish to live: this opinion is not the most natural. We sympathise strongly with the imaginary wishes of the lifeless corpse. We see hovering over us the departed shade, with indignant and imploring looks, demanding of us justice and vengeance. Even of the unthinking and newborn infant, we cannot help entertaining the same notions, though clearly illusive in regard to him; and although it may be clearly demonstrated that he never can have possessed *the right, any more than he has felt the wish, to live.* .....He has not a real right to life, it has never been given or bequeathed, or conferred in any legal way, or by any principle of natural justice equivalent to formal legality."—*Marcus's "Essay on Populousness,"* s. 2.

"We inquire, could not a full-grown animal be so deprived of life,—gradually and painlessly? We establish the theory of stifling, and then—we suppose that the appetite for air might be for an interval of time suspended and nullified—and we show, that during that interval air and life might be withdrawn without pain."—*Marcus's "Theory of Painless Extinction."*

"If sleep so nullify the eagerness of sensation, and if the newborn sleep so readily without an opiate, may we not hope that, during the interval, the sensation of which we treat will again be placed within our empire? and that then we may at will revoke or continue its existence

without infringing the law of humanity,—without inflicting pain? And if, further, we call to our assistance other elements of the physical world; if we compel into our service that *gas*, sometimes so fatal and perfidious, but in this case useful and subservient; shall we not have insured success? And may we not conclude that our industry has but employed these means, which have been, by the intention of Providence itself, placed within our reach?"—*Ibid.*

"Under the New Poor-Law any rule sent from Somerset-house has the same authority with an Act of Parliament."—*Rev. Sir George Robinson's Letter to the Kettering Board*, Oct. 10, 1839.

"The Poor-Law Bill was an Act of charity and benevolence."—*Earl of Winchelsea, House of Lords*, March 26, 1838.

"Among other charges brought against Mr. Laurence, Master of the Bath Union Workhouse, in the investigations held on that person's conduct in 1838—39, it was proved by Mr. T. Hewett, Clerk to the Governor of the Bath Workhouse—and subsequently by the Rev. C. Fowell Watts, since dismissed as Chaplain, on account thereof—that this Laurence, 'though required by the duties of his situation to call over the muster-roll of the inmates of the workhouse every morning, totally neglected this branch of his duty; in consequence of which, the parishes of the Union were charged with the maintenance of paupers for many weeks after they had ceased to be inmates. One pauper, who was in the House only two days, was charged to the parish of Walcot for nearly seven months. Every weekly report made to the Board during that period must consequently have been incorrect, as well as the books kept in the House, the quarterly abstracts, and the weekly returns made to the Commissioners.' That nearly all the accounts this Laurence had returned concerning the expenditure, and the clothing stores intrusted to him, were false. That he was in the habit of taking improper liberties with the females of the establishment, and giving them spirits. That sometime back a pauper in the 'House' had died possessed of half-a-crown, of which sum he (Laurence) gave no account to the Board, but converted it to his own use, though the man was taken out and buried by his friends. Also, that another pauper, named Bates, had died leaving a sovereign which he had appropriated in a like manner. That Mary



Hewitt, a young woman, declared herself prepared to swear that he (Laurence) had forced her more than once into illicit connexion with him; that she had been with child by him; that she told him so in the presence of others; that means were used to induce her to father her child upon some other man; and that she ultimately miscarried. Yet, notwithstanding all these criminal acts on the part of Laurence, he was shielded for a long time by the Commissioners and Bath Guardians, and only, at last, reluctantly dismissed from his situation, and then with 'an excellent character from his last place.' While, on the other hand, Mr. Thomas Hewitt and the Rev. C. Fowell Watts, who made known the fellow's infamous conduct—the former was treated with the most ignominious insult during the investigation, and the latter (Mr. Watts) was incontinently, by the arbitrary ukase of Frankland Lewis's son, G. C. Lewis, and J. G. S. Lefevre, removed from his situation of chaplain to the Union, April 25, 1839."—*For further particulars of Laurence's case, vide The Minutes of the same delivered to the House of Commons, Aug. 5, 1840, and the "Times" Sept. 3, 12, and 15, 1840.*

"The Guardians of the Sudbury Poor-Law Union have lately discovered a most extensive system of fraud which had been perpetrated by the Governor of the Union workhouse. The depredations had been on a scale scarcely credible; and all the supplies of the poor have been put under heavy contribution to supply the Governor's extravagance. It appears that the deficiency in the stores supplied for the use of the paupers caused the Guardians to institute an inquiry, when suspicion fell upon Mr. F. Fisher, the Governor of the House. It transpired that he was living at a rate of expense that his income could not support, and that he kept a female in London, for whom he had an establishment there, and to whom, it was asserted, large quantities of stores, the property of the Guardians, were sent for disposal in the metropolis. On Friday a local constable was sent to the Union-House to apprehend Fisher, who, suspecting the man's errand, escaped by the back of the house, crossing the river by means of a boat moored at the side of the garden, and fled to Ipswich, whence he took the mail to London. The clerk of the magistrates, anticipating the course Fisher would take, gave general orders to the

rural police to look out for him, and he was caught the same evening as he was leaving the mail for the railroad at Brentwood, and taken in a post-chaise back to Sudbury. On his journey, the prisoner attempted to commit suicide by cutting his throat, but the officers prevented him from completing his object, and he was safely lodged in gaol. The Guardians lost no time in sending officers to town to search the house of the woman who had been cohabiting with Fisher, whom they found in a house in the City-road, and there they discovered a large quantity of stores, which they seized and brought down to Sudbury. Fisher has been committed to Bury gaol."—*Suffolk Times, August, 1840.*

"In 1837, a Committee of the House of Commons was formed to investigate the working of the New Poor-Law. Among other persons examined was one Mr. Hawley, an Assistant-Commissioner, who stated that *six shillings a-week was sufficient wages for a labouring man!*"

"Idle, extravagant, and worthless as the working classes are said by the advocates of the Poor-Law to be, and far removed as the aristocracy are from liability to any such charges—much as beer-shops and pawn-shops are frequented by the one class, and gaming-houses and money-lenders shunned by the other,—still, perhaps the maxims so signally successful in correcting the bad habits of the labourers, by throwing them on their own resources, may be at least harmlessly applied in confirming the industry of farmers, and the independence of landlords. If reduction of income have so greatly elevated the moral character of the cultivators of the soil, it is not quite clear to me that reduction of prices and of rents might not be equally beneficial to the occupiers and owners."—*Rev. E. Dewdney's (of Portsmouth) Letter to the Duke of Richmond, May 12, 1840.*

"The Ludlow Guardians have sanctioned and encouraged the withholding medical relief for the *sake of economy*, and in this district (the Clee-hill) the number of cases for which orders have been given is considerably less than half what it was when a fixed salary was paid, recently a contract having been entered into between the Guardians and the Medical Officer, to attend the poor at 8s. a-head. Indeed, since the 27th of September only one order has been given, and this in a district comprising a population of more than 3,000. This is economy with a

vengeance! and the poor are the sufferers! The present medical officer has repeatedly complained of this injustice, but the Shylocklike answer was—"It is the bond"—and they have compelled him to adhere to it!"—*Ludlow Standard*, Oct. 24, 1840.

"There is one right which man has generally been thought to possess, which I am confident he neither does nor can possess—a right to subsistence when his labour will not fairly purchase it. Our laws, indeed, say that he has this right, and bind society to furnish employment and food to those who cannot get them in the regular market; but in so doing they attempt to reverse the laws of nature. A man who is born into a world already possessed, if he cannot get subsistence from his parents, on whom he has a just demand, and if society do not want his labour, has no claim of right to the smallest portion of food, and, in fact, no business to be where he is. At nature's mighty feast, there is no vacant cover for him; she tells him to begone."—*Rev. Mr. Malthus* (*"Essay on Population,"* p. 531).

At Bourn (Lincolnshire) in a sad season of typhus fever, the Guardians were so liberal of port wine that it drew upon them the *honour* of a reprimand from the Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, who had the assurance to recommend them to *drug it* (as they did, he said, at Nottingham) to make it distasteful, and convert it into real, nauseous physic!! This fact was told the General (Johnson, M.P.) and myself by (the humane clergyman of Bourn) a Guardian. The Assistant-Commissioner never showed his face more at Bourn; his masters removed him to Ireland—a more congenial soil, I suppose."—*Extract of a Letter from a Stamford Correspondent (a friend of Gen. Johnson, M.P.) to the Author*, dated Oct. 24, 1840.

"Nothing can be more ruinous than for a legislature to entertain charitable views."—*Earl Haddington, House of Lords*, June, 1838.

"Dr. Pye Smith says to the poor independent minister of Loxley—"When such men as the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and others, who are among the greatest authorities among the Tory members of both Houses of Parliament, have pronounced their decided approbation of the New Poor-Law, you surely ought to have suspected the correctness of your own opinion; an opinion,

I cannot doubt, not resting upon a careful and impartial study of the Act itself, but borrowed from the misrepresentations of ignorant and malevolent persons.' This is the first time that I ever heard that the opinion of any man, however eminent, was to tie up the mouth of a freeborn Englishman. I certainly lament very much that such opinions have been given by the distinguished persons above mentioned. I think by such opinions they have gone very far towards losing the affection of the great mass of the British nation, and shaking that unlimited confidence which would otherwise have been reposed in them. Had it not been for these declarations, my firm opinion is, that a Conservative Ministry would have been brought in by acclamation, before the death of William IV., upon the shoulders of a joyous people."—*Mr. John Walter's Letter to Mr. Samuel Roberts (of Sheffield)*, Feb. 6, 1839.

"I shall never forget being once in company with my late friend, that true son of the Church, and champion of the poor, *Michael Thomas Sadler*; he had been perusing the Report of the 'Poor-Law Commission;' it was lying open before him; his countenance indicated the mournful workings of his soul—sorrow and despair were depicted in every feature. He looked earnestly at me, and placing his finger on the signature of the two bishops (London and Chester), which are appended to that Report, he exclaimed, 'Oastler, it is impossible to save the Church; she is her own executioner. See there, her *death-blow*, struck by two of her Bishops!' "—*Oastler's "Right of the Poor to Liberty and Life."*

"When the more humane Guardians of Ecclesall Bierlow, wrote to the Work-sop Union, to request that they would allow poor old John Berry and his wife something more than *two shillings* a-week to live upon, the answer of the worthy clerk of his Grace the Duke of Portland (I suppose by his Grace's order) was, that if the Union heard any more upon the subject, the *two shillings* would be wholly withdrawn, *i. e.*, if the poor old man (aged 91) and his aged wife could not be satisfied with a shilling each, they must have their old bones shaken in a cart full *twenty miles*, and be put *asunder* into prison."—*Mr. Samuel Roberts's (of Sheffield) Pamphlet.*

"The enemies of God and of the poor will say, '*try the measure, and if you find it does not act well, then amend and re-*



form it.' 'Try the measure,' indeed! 'Reform the Act,' indeed! 'Amend the curse,' indeed! Why, my friends, it is the catechism of hell! It is the devil's own book! It must be *burnt*—out-and-out BURNED. I know that the hangman's fingers will be defiled by the touch—so let him fork it on to the flames. 'Try it?' 'amend it?' 'reform it?' *Try the devil as soon!* Get thee behind me, Satan! 'Amend' Belial, as easily! Reform hell, if you can!!"—*Mr. Oastler's Speech at Huddersfield, Jan. 14, 1837.*

"Ninety-nine out of every hundred of the labouring classes of this land would evade rather than seek employment."—*Lord Brougham, House of Lords, July 21, 1834.*

"Another effect of the Bill had been to increase the independence and improve the character of the agricultural labourer."—*Earl of Devon, House of Lords, March 19, 1838.*

"The allowance of medicine and of wine, and generous food, when it was necessary for sustentation of the patient, was larger, notoriously, than ever it had been under the old system."—*Lord Brougham, House of Lords, March 20, 1838.*

"A clause; proposed by Mr. T. Duncombe, to prevent women above 65 years of age, from being put to work, was *negatived without a division.*"—*House of Commons, August 8, 1839.*

"During the past week Prince Albert (no doubt being tutored by the Whig Ministry so to do, and to earn his kennel's building money), attended by Col. Wilde, paid a visit of inspection to Windsor Union workhouse, which was opened on Saturday last for the reception of its unfortunate inmates. The Prince expressed himself *highly delighted* at the admirable arrangements throughout the extensive building."—*Times, Oct. 28, 1840.*

"I consider any statesmen who support the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act, as totally unfit to lead any party of Christians or constitutionalists. I care not what their rank, talents, influence, or wealth, may be—they are philosophers, not Christians!—they are levellers, not conservators! They may call themselves by what name they please, to gull their followers—they have rendered themselves incapable of guiding the vessel of State in a Christian land!"—*Oastler's Retiring Address to his Friends at Huddersfield Oct. 27, 1840.*

"The labourers themselves acknow-

ledge 'that they live hard, but on the whole are *better off* than formerly; that their masters are kinder to them; that an industrious man has a better chance; and the idle ones are (I use their own words) put to the rout, and forced to beat wide for a living.'—*Mr. Hall's Report, 1837.*

"The trial to which the new system has been exposed, before even it was perfectly organized, shows that it is quite as well adapted to a manufacturing as to an agricultural population."—*Companion to the Almanac, 1838.*

"The overstocked labour-market in the county of Suffolk has been relieved of families comprising upwards of two thousand individuals who have emigrated to Canada."—*Appendix to Third Report of the Commissioners, 1837.*

"We are upheld by the confident persuasion, which every day's experience tends in our opinion to confirm, that not to the rate-payer only, but to the labouring classes themselves, the provisions of the New Law continue to be productive of the greatest benefits."—*Commissioners' Third Report.*

"I avow at once, that I supported the Bill at the time that his Majesty's Ministers proposed it; and I do not repent of what I did on that occasion, in so supporting it; but, on the contrary, I rejoice in the part I then took, and I now congratulate his Majesty's Ministers on its success."—*Duke of Wellington, House of Lords, April 7, 1837.*

"A youth of 18 would be as completely justified in indulging the sexual passion with every object capable of exciting it, as in following indiscriminately every impulse of his benevolence."—*Malthus—"Essay on Population," p. 559.*

"The infant is, comparatively speaking, of no value to society, as others will immediately supply its place."—*Ibid., p. 540.*

"He was happy to state that he had in this measure (the Bastardy Clause) the concurrence of a Right Rev. Prelate (Chester), the mere mention of whose name would be sufficient to testify, that it had nothing in it contrary to the law of God, or opposed to the best feelings of humanity."—*Bishop of London, House of Lords, August 8, 1834.*

"Suppose, at some distant day, it is proposed as expedient to begin quite *de novo*: that all land shall be divided afresh, and every man have his share:

who can plead for the existing rights of property? Neither the authors or abettors of the New Poor-Law!!"—*The Rev. Edward Duncombe's (Newton Kyme, Yorkshire) Pamphlet on Church Reform.*

"All their experience has convinced the Commissioners 'of the applicability to the manufacturing districts both of the principles of the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act, and the mode of administration which it prescribes.'"—*Companion to the Almanac*, 1839.

"The comforts of the aged and infirm are increased (!!).....The industry and moral character of the poor are improved (!!).....Their (the people's) discontent has been abated, and their moral and social condition has in every way improved (!!)."—"*Commissioners' Canterbury*" for 1839.

"I rejoice to think that the stern decree of the Poor-Law Commissioners has been already more than once disregarded by the Kettering Guardians, and that one of the last acts of my official existence at the Board was to concur in an order of out-door relief to a poor woman of my own parish, who, according to the doctrine of the Commissioners, ought to have been sent away with the brief reply, 'House offered.'"—*Sir George Robinson's Letter to the Kettering Guardians*, Oct. 10, 1839.

"The Report on Quackery, read by Dr. Cowan, at the late meeting of the Provincial Medical Association, says, that a statement was made to Lord John Russell, when Home-Secretary, that out of 1,830 practitioners, employed under the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, 327 had not been examined in surgery, 323 had not been examined in medicine, and 233 had not been examined at all!"—*Felix Farley*, Oct. 10, 1840.

"**TYRANNY OF THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS OVER THE BOARDS OF GUARDIANS WHO GIVE OUT-DOOR RELIEF INSTEAD OF IMPRISONING THE POOR.**—'We have felt it necessary to say this much on the subject of partial relief, notwithstanding we have so repeatedly noticed it in our former reports, because we are convinced, that unless the proceedings of the Guardians be watched with the greatest vigilance, there is great risk of their continuing (to give out-door relief) or returning to this system.'"—*Commissioners' Report*, 1840, sect. 40.

"Severity towards the poor was, in Dr. Johnson's opinion, an undoubted and

constant attendant on Whiggism."—*Mrs. Piozzi.*

"None are legally entitled to relief who have any property, or who are not in a state of absolute destitution, and in danger of perishing for want if relief be withheld.—By order of the Board, Edwin Chadwick, Secretary."—*Commissioners' Third Report*, p. 88.

"I have seen Eliza Screece beaten three times by the Master. She was twice flogged standing up, and the third time she was laid upon the table, and beaten with a rod. She was very violently flogged, and I have seen spots of blood upon her chemise. When she was flogged the only clothes she had on was her chemise and under-petticoat, shoes and stockings. She took them off herself at the desire of the Master, and laid them down by her. She also removed her things off her shoulders; and because her petticoats were not untied, Mr. Miles told her to strip. The Master stripped up her clothes, and it required two of us to hold her down, she struggled so violently. The Master said *he would make her feel*. Mr. Miles told me to hold her, and I refused on the ground that I had children of my own. He then said—'Don't let me have any of your d—d nonsense, or I'll serve you the same; you want twenty-four hours in the cage.'"—*Prosecution of the Master of the Hoo Union*, "*Morning Herald*, Jan. 7, 1841.

"The New Poor-Laws are a guarantee to the respectable operatives against the encroachments of the less meritorious."—*Dan. O'Connell.*

"Laurence, the Ex-Master of the Bath Union has been, by the recommendation of Mr. Weale, the Commissioner, transferred to a Union in Derbyshire; and Howe, before coming to the Eton workhouse, had been dismissed from his situation as Master of another workhouse, for cruelty to a child, which died in consequence."—*Times*, Jan. 11, 1841.

"The old Poor-Law required revision and amendment, and the gentlemen who had undertaken to make laws for us tacitly confessed that they knew nothing of the matter, by despatching a number of persons to collect Poor-Law tittle-tattle in every corner of England and Wales. The immediate result of this gossiping-commission was a garbled report, in the preparation of which, the testimony favourable to the poor was thrown overboard, while that which represented the



most industrious population on earth as a collection of lazy cheats and thieves, was carefully selected and elaborately drawn out. Even the preparation of an index to those atrocious libels on the labouring classes, was basely taken advantage of to propagate opinions, instead of merely referring to facts. That index was made to heighten and to condense the libels of a thousand folios into a few pages of concentrated venom; and all this mass of idle tittle-tattle and malignant slander was urged in proof of an overwhelming necessity for the appointment of that shoal of Commissioners and Assistants who now revel in the proceeds of the poor man's labour."—*Mr. Bowen's Letter in the "Times,"* Dec. 23, 1840.

"Destitution the ground of relief;" "The workhouse the test of destitution;" "The parish the worst paymaster, and the hardest taskmaster;" "None are entitled to more than will relieve their actual wants, and the idle, the improvident, and the worthless, are entitled to no less;" "Any relief is a benefit, and the only question is one of amount and measure."—*Commissioners' Aphorisms.*

"In the early part of last week, her Majesty the Queen Dowager, attended by Earl Howe, Lady Clinton, and other members in the Royal suite, inspected the Uttoxeter Union workhouse. In going over the different apartments her Majesty was pleased to express her approbation at the cleanliness (?) of the establishment, and admired the general arrangements for the comforts (?) of its poor inmates, who, it is needless to observe, were delighted (?) at her Majesty's affability and condescension."—*Hereford Journal (Commissioners' Print),* Dec. 2, 1840.

"I attended a cattle-show yesterday; but what public good can be intended by the reward of that cruelty and waste required to bring the creatures to that state of unnatural fatness, which unfits them either for service or for food? The groans of some, and their positive inability to rise unassisted, are sufficient evidence of the sufferings they must necessarily undergo. And the rice, for instance, upon which they are glutted for the whole preceding year, would keep several families from the miseries of starvation and the workhouse."—*A Hint to Earl Spencer and other Cattle Breeders and Favourers of the New Poor-Law,* "Times," Dec. 23, 1840.

"The Board of Guardians of the

Thornbury (Gloucestershire) Union, on Friday, presented to their Chairman, Wm. Joyner Ellis, Esq., a splendid and massive piece of plate, at the Aust Passage Hotel, in testimony of their respect for his character and their high estimation of his public services. Lord Segrave, in presenting the plate, alluded to the vile efforts and falsehoods of unprincipled party writers. He hoped and believed that the measure was fraught with benefits and advantages which would be felt and appreciated still more than they were at present.....The fact was, the old Poor-Law had brought with it a mass of abuses, which had crept in till they had grown to such an alarming height, that, had they been suffered to go further, everything would have been overwhelmed by them—the rate-payer would have been overwhelmed, as well as the pauper who subsisted on the rates. That, it was clear, could not be continued; and, accordingly, the good (?), the patriotic (?), the wise (!!), of all parties, determined to remove the evil; and the Dukes of Richmond and Wellington, Earl Grey, the Bench of Bishops, and the leaders of the House of Commons, saw the imperative necessity for the change, and lent their most cordial, their most efficient, and industrious support to the measure until completed. It was very true that it was not a perfect measure; there were some of its provisions, doubtless, which required amendment; but, considering how great was the nature of the change it introduced, the wonder was that it was so near perfection. Time had developed its value, and he trusted gentlemen would never be deterred from the support of a measure of which they approved, because it was unpopular: the evil and the ignorant might revile it, but time would test and disclose its value."—*Shrewsbury Chronicle,* August 28, 1840.

"Two of the Assistant-Commissioners, prominently active in proving how little was sufficient for the stomachs of the poor, have been known to swallow eleven bottles of Champagne at a sitting!"—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal,* Jan. 2, 1841.

"DISGRACEFUL AND INHUMAN CONDUCT OF A UNION MASTER.—At the Eton Petty Sessions, held on Wednesday, a summons was applied for against Joseph Howe, the Master of the Union workhouse, for inhuman treatment of a pauper named Elizabeth Wyse, at pre-

sent an inmate of the workhouse. It appeared that on Sunday last, the woman Wyse had received permission to bathe her children's feet, which were at the time affected with chilblains from the severity of the weather. She had, however, scarcely commenced doing so, when she was spoken to by the Master, and her replies not having been deemed by him sufficiently respectful, some altercation ensued, upon which he seized her with great violence, and carried her to the refractory ward, in which she remained locked up from ten o'clock on Sunday morning until the same hour on the following day. The dungeon in which she was confined was generally called the 'black hole' by the paupers, from its wretched and dismal appearance, and in this hole, the windows of which were unglazed, and entirely open to the severity of the intense frost which prevailed on Sunday night, was this poor creature immured, without sheet or blanket, or covering of any description, and even without a truss of straw upon which to lay herself. On the following morning, when liberated from her dungeon, she was discovered by the Master, thawing her frozen limbs by the fire-side; she was then peremptorily directed by him to go instantly and clean out the cell in which she had been confined; and, on her begging permission to remain a short time longer at the fire, he, not content with his former severity, caught her by the middle, and, after a severe struggle, again dragged her to the same cell in which she had already suffered so much. In this place she endured a further incarceration of nine hours."—*Conservative Journal*, Jan. 2, 1841.

"When the wolves make laws for lambs, it is for the *latter* to say whether they *work well or not*."—*Mr. Samuel Roberts, of Sheffield*.

"According to the advocates for the bill, the workhouse is to be made the 'TEST' of the claimants for relief. This means that the treatment is to be such that no one, unless in absolute destitution, with impending starvation hovering over him and his family, will submit to it! Thus, by this inhuman experiment, the aged, the maimed, and the poor, who ought to spend their latter hours in comfort, are to be crucified as a 'test' for claimants for relief! In some cases, this has been carried so far, that the inmates have died, in direct consequence of improper and imperfect nutriment being

afforded them. Now as to this we shall only say, that for this treatment of parish apprentices Elizabeth Brownrigg in the last, and Mary Hibner in the present century, lost their lives on a gallows, amid the well-merited execrations of the people. To this, then, we have come, that for *assisting*, under colour of law, to bring about that in England for which Brownrigg and Hibner were *hanged*, Sir John Hibner receives '*a thousand a-year*,' and Lady Brownrigg '*patronizes*' concerts!"—*Roberts's "The Peers, The People, and The Poor."*

"What do the rich and noble men of the nation, who are famishing and afflicting to death the worn-out labourers of the land, do with their sporting dogs and horses, when *they* are old? Do they calculate to a morsel how little food will serve to keep them alive, or how coarse and nauseous that food may be? or do they put them in clammingshouses (slaughterhouses) till they die? No; they let *them* live in comfort.—*Ibid*.

"There are, I believe, in England and Wales, somewhat about three thousand parishes. In some ten or a dozen, we will say the utmost, fifty agricultural parishes, principally in the south of England, in which parishes a few of our leading rulers had considerable estates; in them the rates had become very high, they alleged from *abuse* of the law by resident magistrates. (Pray, ought any law to be condemned for the *abuse* of it?) Now, supposing this to have been the case, ought two thousand nine hundred and fifty contented parishes to be thrown into confusion, and their poor famished, because some *abuses* were alleged to have crept into the administration of fifty, in which some of our *Ogre Rulers* had estates? Which abuses (if really existing) might have been at once remedied by the interested parties going themselves to their estates, and that with a hundredth part of the trouble, which, to their eternal disgrace, and, if I mistake not, to their *eternal* punishment, is now taking by the Duke of Richmond, Earl Spencer, Earl Fitzwilliam, the Duke of Portland, and many others, to deprive the poor of their rights, and in many instances to hasten their death. Well, but these wise men of Gotham, who, if they ever had any, had lost their wits, cried out 'Wolf!' so lustily, that more than one-half of all the wise men in the nation, in Parliament assembled, concluded, as they were told, that if this new poor destructive Bill did



not pass, and become the law of the land within a very few days, their estates would not be their own at the end of twelve months. As the great soul-pledging wool-stapler (Brougham) told them this—how could they doubt it? Well! what was the object? Simply and solely this, that *less money should be paid in future in poor-rates*. This was the sole object. As no tax in the world ever was, or ever will be, collected and administered at a proportionate less expense than our old poor-rates, it is perfectly clear that the poor in future must receive at least as much less than formerly, as the rate-payers contributed less. This, then, was clearly robbing *poor* Peter to pay *rich* Paul—Paul being the lawyer, and Peter the client, who having before only *one* coat had only *half a one* left.”—*Ibid*.

“The unfeelingness of the higher ranks towards the sufferings of the poor are ‘frightful,’ exclaims Mr. Bowen, ‘as when Spallanzani or Magendie twist their accursed ligatures round the organs of life and of sensation, lacerating the quivering nerve, and puncturing the palpitating heart, that they may impiously pry into the sanctuary of nature, and detect *under how much torture, and with how little sustenance*, existence may be sustained. The heart shrinks back sickened and appalled from such presumptuous exhibitions, and no adroitness in the details of the operator can reconcile humanity to the frightful experiment.’ Thus it is that the higher ranks in these degenerate days deal with their poor and afflicted fellow-creatures! They have not *yet*, it is true, proceeded quite so far as to consign them *before death* to the tender mercies of the anatomists, to nail their hands and feet down to the bloody table, and, after gagging them, deliberately to proceed to lay open the seat of life, and ‘*lacerate the quivering nerve, and puncture the palpitating heart, that they may impiously pry into the sanctuary of nature, in order to detect* (otherwise than the New Poor-Law,) *under how much torture, and with how little sustenance, existence may be sustained.*’ This (by law) they have not *yet* been authorized to do; but who will dare to say how long (if our present wicked rulers continue to govern this disgraced empire,) it may be before they are so authorized. They possess the same right to decree that as they had to decree dissection. They are only different degrees of punishment inflicted for no crime. Do not the nerves quiver, and the heart palpitate, of both the victim

(before death), and of the immediate relatives of the poor innocent doomed to *dissection*? And for *what crime*? Because he is poor and *powerless*! But who will dare to say that he is not by this accursed law doomed to be given up *alive* to the knife of the anatomists? Were he wanted to be so given up, the crime is, by the new law, rendered so easy of commission, that detection, were the Surgeon and the Governor combined, would be next (humanly speaking) to impossible.”—*Ibid*.

“Under the old law unanimity did prevail so far as varying times and circumstances rendered it desirable; but under the new law (whose excellence consisted, it was stated, in making it general and permanent) I doubt if there be two Unions in the kingdom acting alike; certainly not one in full accordance with the law itself. The Great Law Manufactory established at Somerset-house, is kept constantly at work in framing, in revising, in altering, and abrogating—but still none can be made to suit all—so that at last it has, it seems, been found necessary for the Great Wholesale Law Manufacturer to make different laws for different places, according as he found they would be submitted to. According to law, *i. e.*, according to the law as first struck off, there was to be an equality of quantity, quality, weight, and measure, throughout the kingdom; but this it was found would not do; inquiry, therefore, was made by the under-inquisitors, how much men generally eat in each district, altering their diet for each proportionably, as if the quantity of food required to keep the souls and bodies of paupers together varied accordingly as their richer neighbours eat more or less. In this Union of Sheffield, for instance, they have twice as much allowed as they have in some others. Here too, by far the greater part of the paupers are relieved at their own homes—in most others very few are so. Here, and in all the manufacturing districts, able-bodied men are relieved at home in great numbers (more in some instances than under the old law)—in the agricultural districts scarcely at all.”—*Ibid*.

“The part he took in carrying that law would always, in reviewing the events of his public life, be a satisfaction to him.”—*Lord John Russell, House of Commons, Jan. 29, 1841.*

“The structure of the bill is despotism. Three men, called Commissioners, selected, avowedly, on account of their hard

hearts, unfeeling dispositions, unyieldingness to the natural emotions of pity, have power given them to treat the poor of England *nearly as they please*. These three *Neros* have in every county subordinate tyrants, called Assistant Poor-Law Commissioners, who are to perform, as far as they can, the cruel orders of the three incarnate fiends in London. In order to take a part of the odium from these tyrants, the Act directed 'Guardians' to be elected by the rate-payers; but these Guardians have no power under the bill to act for themselves. The covert intention is, gradually to get men elected who will wink at, and in time sanction, the denial of all relief as intended by the bill, and, at the same time, be a sort of shield for the Commissioners. This it is hoped to effect *gradually*, as the sight of cruelty gradually hardens men's minds."—*Mr. Samuel Roberts's "The Peers, The People, and The Poor."*

"Those who framed the statute of Elizabeth were not adepts in political science,—they were not acquainted with the true principle of population,—they could not foresee that a Malthus would arise to enlighten mankind.....The right to share in a fixed fund is the grand mischief of the Poor-Laws, with the seeds of which they were originally pregnant..... I shall say nothing, *at present*, for repealing the Poor-Law itself. I shall, *for the present*, assume, that the statute of Elizabeth cannot now be dealt with."—*Lord Brougham on moving the Second Reading.*

"From the bottom of our souls, as Christians and as Churchmen, we feel, that when the poor, for whom our Saviour came down from heaven, are trampled under the hoofs of a vain and selfish philosophy, it is no time for the disciples of our Lord to abide in the sheepfolds to hear the bleating of the flocks. The Church of England is called upon, in this trying hour, to prove by her conduct, that she is indeed the church founded by the meek and humble Jesus. Her clergy are bound to stand by that portion of humanity which constitutes the base of society. Oh! that they would make common cause with the injured poor and the depressed labourers of their country! Then might the Church smile at the worst that her foes could meditate; for the God of the necessitous would take her part, and she will have righted herself by becoming—what should be the prime characteristic of a Christian establishment—the poor man's church; and he who came to refresh the

weary and heavy laden, will bless her endeavours, and crown her charitable offices with triumph. When a tyrannical triumvirate proscribes in awful characters so many thousands of our fellow-citizens and fellow-Christians (for two-thirds of the population belong to that class which comprehends the pauper)—when these worse than Antonii and Lepidi rule over the indigent, and with legal violence, 'do deeds to make the angels weep,' and their blood runs cold, and bids their will avouch it; at such a time the Church should open her arms to welcome the oppressed poor, the halt, the blind, the stricken, to her capacious bosom. The pulpits should resound with notes of lamentation, and with the voice of welcome. When they, who are enabled to do so, by the goodness of Providence, approach with comparative joy the throne of the universal Father, they should be reminded, in the first place, that it is their first duty to love everything that he hath made; that every form which bears the image of God is their brother, and that every being that is dear to *him* ought also to be dear unto them. If with mental vision, brightened by the advantages of education, they have looked with gratitude at that perpetual care whereby the universe is maintained, and in which everything 'lives and moves and has its being;' a voice touched by the living coal from God's altar, should whisper in their ear, that inasmuch as they are members of the mighty system, on *them* some sentient immortal beings, journeying from the thorny thoroughfares of preparative existence, depend for succour and support; and that the noblest career which the highest, wisest, and best of mankind can run, is that of being fellow-workers, with the Giver of all good, in the welfare of the creation."—*Church of England Quarterly Review.*

"Now I really doubt whether Satan himself, if he could have obtained the same power to afflict and try this nation as he did to put Job to the test, could have devised any means so likely to cause this kingdom to 'curse God and die,' as this accursed New Poor-Law Bill. All moral and religious principles— all fear of offending God and afflicting men, are uprooted. Miseries worse, far worse, than ever Job endured, are by this law inflicted on hundreds of thousands of unoffending Britons. Where Satan destroyed one of the children of Job—he and his agents have by this law destroyed a thousand of the children of Britain. With



what delight must his Satanic Majesty now be going to and fro, and walking up and down in this country, his now assigned probationary victim! How easy, how effectual, how complete, were his temptations in the occupiers of High Places! How readily they became his mercenary instruments! 'See,' said the wily tempter to them, 'see all these millions of sovereigns which are now spread before you, devoted, by fools, to maintain useless beings ten times better dead than living—all these will I give you, if you will *only* fall down, worship, and henceforth obey me!' And they said unto him, 'Remain with us, Satan, and declare unto us thy will, and we will be thy servants, and henceforth obey thee in everything, for the kingdom is ours and all the people therein.' So Satan remained with them, and he concocted for them the New Poor-Law Bill; he planted it in the Metropolis, where his agents are now working his pleasure; and, as far as they can, to the ruin of this land, which had hitherto—more than any other—been able to set his machinations at defiance."—*Mr. Samuel Roberts's "The Peers, The People, and The Poor."*

"What a sweet expense the Triune Pope and all his squad of travelling Cardinals will be! as well as the erection and subsequent final alteration into Lunatic Asylums of the New Bastiles will be, with the open salaries, and secret perquisites, of the forty or fifty widely dispersed Guardians. As to the poor *Doctors* and *Parsons*, they are to be paid pretty much in proportion to their services which are not required to be many; the Parsons not being to be troubled with burying the bodies which the Doctors are to have in part of payment. Never was a Bill in this world passed so promotive and encouraging of roguery as the New Poor-Law Bill;—this is in some degree always the case with such laws as are obscure—but this is worse than obscure. I have heard of many Acts of Parliament which no one but the framers could understand; but this is one which even they cannot comprehend. I have heard of one instance in which application was made for explanation to the travelling law dispensers first—but in vain; then to the Great fixed *Infallible*—but even he was at a nonplus; the Secretary of State was then referred to, and the applicants by him advised to appeal to the then King's Bench."—*Ibid.*

"Why, if the Bill be so self-evidently advantageous, is there any necessity to

employ Commissioners to fabricate voluminous *Reports*, at a great expense to the public, from year to year, filled with the most palpable misrepresentations and falsehoods, that ever appeared in print? Why, if the Bill is so decidedly good, do not the patriotic Ministers take the sense of all the different parishes in the kingdom (who are the best able to judge, and have now had an opportunity of judging) on the subject? Why, when the people in some parishes have called meetings to take the subject into consideration, have police-officers been sent down from London, and even soldiers with loaded fire-arms to check the freedom of debate upon the subject? Why, in these times, when we are told that the country cannot afford to pay the old poor-rates, are such demands for secret service-money made, as thirty-five thousand pounds at a time, but to bribe the country, particularly the public periodical press to cajole the people by praising the New Law? Why, when any member of the House of Commons has, from any motives, annoyed the Ministers by abusing the New Law, have they stopped his mouth by cramming him with places or pensions, or if they have no place to suit him, creating such, as the Director of Cabs, Coaches, &c.? Why, if truth be their object, do they, as soon as they hear of a clergyman—should it even be in Cumberland—opposing the New Bill, do they send down their emissaries—first to *dissuade* him from persevering; if that fails, to induce him by promises—and if still unsuccessful, to threaten: and even through his Diocesan or others, annoy and persecute him as much as ever they are able? Why, if they only wish to do justly, do they use their best endeavours to induce every man of influence to exert it in preventing any of his dependents from declaring their objections to the Bill? Why, but to cram the Bill down the throats of the people who are sick of it,—do Dukes, and Earls, and Lords—who never did so before—go, and sit for hours in a dusty prison, among farmers, grocers, and cow-jobbers, like fellows well met, to take a few pounds from the bare maintenance of the poor, which is more their right than the estates of the nobles are theirs? If they sought for nothing but what was just, why did they endeavour to lower the character of all the poor in the land by hired miscreants, and not only asserted those falsehoods as truths to the whole world in both Houses of Parliament, but

published them, at great expense, to be distributed gratis through the kingdom?" —*The Rev. Dr. Pye Smith and the New Poor-Law,*" by Samuel Roberts.

"If a fourth of the two millions of which the *poor* are being robbed had been taken from the *Church*—is there a sacred spire or tower in the kingdom that would not have vibrated with the effect of the thundering voices which would have proceeded from the pulpits beneath? Oh! if our *light* be darkness—how great is that darkness? If the God-appointed *Guardians of the Poor* be their *Oppressors*, to whom, in this world, shall they look for protection? Dreadful as these things are, I have still worse to relate. Here, I fear, the *Star-chamber* have been too successful—they knew the secret ways of the citadel; they made their attack on Mammon-gate, and they found an easy entrance."—*Ibid.*

"The Commissioners found out that 'Rascally Publications' were continually being issued against them and their wicked law. They were well aware that the press was a powerful engine, possessing more than a hundred horse or ass ministerial power. They, however, knew too, that this machine might be made, by *proper greasing*, to work, in a great measure, either for or against them. Having command of the national grease-pot—as well as of the unnational purse of secret service-money—they have been enabled to bring by far the greater number of those engines to work for them. Some of them are said to be almost clogged by them with grease. Thus is this important source of knowledge and truth, not only turned out of its due course, but impelled into a contrary one, and so polluted as to render the waters which it pumps up, poisonous, instead of refreshing. I apprehend that more than nine-tenths of the public periodical press is thus polluted. Every means, however, '*rascally*,' that could be devised by the determined maintainers of that ruinous disgrace to England—the New Poor-Law, has been resorted to, to uphold it. Not only are enormous sums of the *secret service-money* applied (as has been asserted without contradiction) to thus sustaining the accursed law, but every method is taken to injure those few newspapers which have dared honestly to expose and condemn it. While the sycophant papers in the same places, whose Editors are perhaps *Guardians* or *Overseers*, may contain from ten to twenty advertisements on the subject, the former have not one sent to them;

nay, resolutions of *Guardians* have been passed to prevent it. Nay, emissaries are sent round to cajole or intimidate them, while all the almost innumerable batteners on the villain-feeding law, are opposed to them."—*Ibid.*

"Our House of Commons is corrupted to the core by mercenary members, enjoying, or looking forwards to, places for supporting the Bill, many of them being proprietors of the papers which defend it. Thus corruption from this foul infectious source, is pervading all grades of society above the lower ranks—

'Fleas there are which live on men,  
While other fleas bite them again;  
These little fleas have fleas that bite 'em,  
Thus fleas bite fleas *ad infinitum*.'"

—*Ibid.*

"By the accumulation of twenty, thirty, or forty parishes into one Union, the poor are often thrown to the distance of six, eight, or ten miles from the noble and ignoble famishers who assemble at the (*Dis*) Union prison, to whom they are to apply, even if they happen to be dying for want. There they may go—I well know—two, three, or four times, before they can even get an answer—which will generally be, you must *come in*. Well, but if they get a shilling and a short-weight loaf per week allowed, and happen to be sick, the coming of the *Doctor* and the *Relieving Officer*, will be equally uncertain, unless the poor old woman should happen to have a handsome granddaughter living with her to take care of her. In that case it has been known that the latter gentleman has been punctual, and not only freely bestowed his favours on the old woman, but even condescended to *force* them on the young one."—*Ibid.*

"There is one clause of the Bill, beyond all other superexcellent. I believe that it originated with either Lord Brougham, or Lord Melbourne, probably in company with Mrs. Norton when the blinds were down; it, however, was the most strongly enforced by one of the highest *dignitaries* of the Established Church of England—a man considered as being as well acquainted with the ways of the world as most of the cloth in the kingdom, and one who in this case must have been disinterested. When a poor, frail, trembling female was brought and placed before our blessed Saviour, accused of a certain crime, he mildly told that man among the Priests and Levites (who had brought her and stood around) who



was without sin, to cast a stone at her. My Lord of London was not among them—so they all, one by one—from some reason or other—slunk away.”—*Ibid.*

“If my Lord Brougham’s design in concocting this unprecedented Bill had, instead of ‘testing’ the sufferings of the poor, been to ‘test’ the humanity and understandings of the *Aristocracy*, it could hardly have been better contrived. I am, of course, speaking of them as a body—individual exceptions there happily are. Nevertheless, harsh as the assertion may sound, I am sure that if I were compelled to name the class of human beings with whose conduct I had the most reason to be dissatisfied in the whole empire, I should name the *Aristocracy* of Britain, particularly as it has been shown in their conduct respecting this infamous Bill. To compare them with savages, or even heathens of any description, is out of the question. If the *Aristocracy* are vile, it is contempt of the clearest light, the greatest advantages, the purest example, the highest obligations, the most holy ties, the most solemn engagements. They can have no plea of either ignorance or poverty. If, then, they go down to hell, it must indeed be *with the lighted torch in their hands*.”—*Lord Brougham and the New Poor-Laws, by Samuel Roberts.*

“You have followed in the train of certain persons in Yorkshire and Lancashire, whose language and proceedings have been seditious, and even next to treasonable, in opposing the operation of a most wise and beneficent law.”—*Dr. Pye Smith’s “Letter to the Rev. John Hanson,” Independent Minister of Loxley, March, 26, 1838.*

“By the Bench—I was once flogged because a piece of something stuck to a dish containing the pudding which was kept ready for master against he came home from hunting.’ By Mr. Prall—‘Master used to go a-hunting very often. I have heard ‘Missus’ say so, and have seen him go away on his horse.’”—*Examination of the Master of the Hoo Union for cruelly and indecently beating the children, “Times,” Jan. 5, 1841.*

“I could not tell how Mr. Miles could act so cruelly in cold blood, for after he had given one stroke, his blood appeared to rise, and his anger increase.”—*Ibid.*

“HOO UNION. — The depositions of the witnesses examined before the Magistrates at Rochester, against Miles, the master of the Hoo Union workhouse,

who, it will be remembered, was charged with various acts of cruelty to the children under the care of the matron, were, as required, duly forwarded to the Marquis of Normanby. The receipt of them was formally acknowledged by a letter from the noble secretary, but he has suffered the assizes to go by without giving directions to Mr. Vizard, the newly-appointed solicitor to the Home-office, or any one else, to move in the case. Miles still remains in the establishment at Hoo, as before. It was reported that he had been dismissed by the Poor-Law Commissioners, and certainly as far as papers, signatures, and seals go, he was so, but no further. Thus is public decency outraged, and public justice mocked at and defied, by the despotic rulers over England’s poor. The effect of the retention of such a person in his situation is to terrify the helpless creatures under his control, and to stifle all further complaint and inquiry. Some of the paupers who appeared against Miles at Rochester have since been threatened (it may be guessed by whom) with imprisonment for swearing falsely against him.”—*Times, April 6, 1841.*

“As to the Poor-Law, I should be ashamed to raise a cry upon that subject, even to win my election. I believe and trust a great deal of good (?) will come out of it.”—*Mr. Thomas Dyke Acland, M.P., for West Somerset, his Address, 1837.*

“The Poor-Law Commissioners were now trying to introduce the infernal system into London, and in order to disguise from the public the extent of its cruelty, they allowed the poor in the London workhouses eleven pints of beer per week, gave them leave to go out of Sundays, and forbore to insist on carrying into effect the disgraceful regulations for separating married couples. They made their regulations as palatable as they could, in order to blind the public.”—*Times, Feb. 20, 1838.*

“Is it not a moving and lamentable commentary on Whig patriotism, to see Mr. Bigge, who has grown grey with bawling for reform, sitting at the Morpeth Poor-Law Union, with the minute-book before him containing a resolution, *that the poor shall no longer have the rights of Christian Burial?*”—*Blakey’s “Controversial Letters with the Morpeth Board.”*

"Like are their merits, like rewards they share;  
That shines a Consul, this a Commissioner."—DUNCIAD.

"Beggars in ev'ry age and nation,  
Are rogues and fools by situation;  
The rich and great are understood  
To be of course both wise and good."—CHURCHILL.

"Who are these Assistant-Commissioners who assume such airs, and ride rough-shod over the yeomanry and gentry of rural England? They are composed of briefless barristers, boy reformers, and the hungry hangers-on of Whig families. As a sample of the set we will mention that four or five years ago, an Assistant-Commissioner in Suffolk, a philosophic opium-eater, who is to supersede by his schemes of education all the scholastic establishments in the kingdom, prepared himself for an encounter with a refractory board by an extra dose of his favourite stimulant; 'and now,' said he, '*I will break their necks.*'"—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Sep. 19, 1840.

"Lord Howick says, 'with respect to the able-bodied, relief was not now lavished upon them as it was formerly; they did not now receive indiscriminately large allowances from the parish; but in return for that deprivation, the really honest and industrious were enabled, without being indebted to any man, of their own honest industry, to maintain themselves in comfort, and frequently by their active exertions to raise themselves to a station of life far superior to that in which they were brought up. These were the consequences of the law which the Hon. Member for Oldham proposed to repeal. He trusted, therefore, that the House, by the decided majority by which it would negative that proposition, would show its approbation of the measure, and its regard for the poor and industrious classes.' So, a man, his wife, and five or six children, with 8s. a-week, are expected to raise themselves far above the sphere in which they were brought up! If they can be honest under such circumstances, they are indeed the purest of human beings! Honesty with half-filled bellies!—what a glorious picture! Lord Howick has £2,580 a-year, I believe, and I could find a man starving upon 8s. a-week with more common sense than his Lordship."—*A Suffolk Juror's "Letters."*

written to *Mr. Somebody*, 'that no legislative enactment has ever tended more effectually to raise the character of our *pauper* population!' There is scarcely a sentence in this letter that is not open to censure, and I may one day return to it; but that a Bishop, who has been raised from a humble station to affluence and idleness, by an imbecile Ministry, merely for publishing a pamphlet to further their views, should *dare* to use the word *pauper*, whilst he is living upon what was set apart chiefly for the use of the poor, when we had no paupers!.....The Bishop says, "Whenever the Bill has been allowed a fair trial, the condition of the poor has obviously improved; and I heard the wives and mothers of the labourers repeatedly express satisfaction at the increase of their domestic comforts!" Before I should question the veracity of so *high* a functionary as a Bishop, that I might not mislead my readers, I made some inquiries in this parish, and I will report a few cases:—

"The first case is of a man, his wife, and seven children. He earns, when in work, 9s. himself, and one of his boys 1s. 6d., together 10s. 6d. a-week, for nine persons! The man is unwell, and he has no allowance! I asked the woman, if the New Poor-Law had made her husband more sober, more prudent, or more industrious. She said, 'No, Sir; my husband has always been a hard-working man, and a good husband; we used to be distressed under the old law with our large family, but now we have not enough to live upon at all—the sooner we are dead the better.' *This woman, then, is not one of the Bishop's informants!*

"The second case is of a man, his wife, and four children; he and his family have earned 5s. only, in the last five inclement weeks. 'How do you live?' 'I do not know; I happened to have a few potatoes.' He was so weak as to be hardly able to stand. He can have no allowance, but he and his family may go into the Union-House. *This man's wife is not one of the Bishop's happy women!*

"The Bishop of Norwich has just



"The third case is an old sick man and his wife, their allowance is 1s. 6d., and one stone of flour in a week; 3s. 7d. in the whole—they have not food enough! How should they? They would cost the parish 7s. 6d. a-week, in the Union-House, notwithstanding the *economy* of that place! This poor man has worked with *one kind master thirty-three years!* during which time he has received eleven hundred pounds for the labour of himself and family! 'Eleven Hundred Pounds!' a Commissioner would cry out, 'Why! you ought to have saved enough from such a sum to keep yourself and wife to the end of your days in independence!' 'Yes, Sir; but I have brought up a family of seven children with very little assistance from the parish, and I am told that half my earnings has always gone for taxes, and if you divide the money for 1,721 weeks, you may easily see I had never too much to maintain my family. They tell me that you have more every year out of the taxes than I have earned in my life, and your chief business is to make poor people live nearly without food. However, we shall soon be out of our misery; we are nearly starved, and, of course, such food as we can get for 3s. 7d. a-week, will soon bring disease and death!' " *I have not found a Bishop's happy woman yet!*

"The fourth case: An able-bodied man, his wife, and six children; the average earnings of the man, 8s. a-week; a stout boy, 3s.; the total income 11s. Two sick children, but being one of the '*independent*' sort, the man has no allowance for them, except surgical attendance. The Union Surgeon was sent for to one of the children last Tuesday, his assistant saw the child; it was very ill; he sent it some powders, nothing else. The woman went for some more *medicine* on Thursday morning; the child was no better, and the assistant said he would see it in the course of the day; but he did not attend; nor did he on the Friday, till the evening; the poor man, after he left his work, having ventured to go and inform the Doctor of the state of the child, the assistant went directly, and said, '*I had forgotten it.*' 'Oh, Sir,' said the poor mother, 'if this had been a rich person's child, you would not have forgotten it!' 'Well,' said he, '*have you any brandy in the house?*' What a question for a 11s. a-week family! 'Have you an egg?' 'No.' 'Well, then, send in *my name* to ask your mistress for a little

brandy and an egg.' The poor creature had them, of course, but '*my name*' had no weight in the grant! The poor woman had several restless nights with the poor child, but she sat up the whole of that night, and in the morning she had bread only for breakfast—oh yes, water! Bread and water! *Felons' allowance!!* The child wished for a morsel of meat. Vain wish! The poor child died on Sunday morning. Happy release! Another escape from the tender mercies of Poor-Law Commissioners, Guardians, Relieving-Officers, and Union-Surgeons! I could not ask this poor unhappy woman how she liked the New Law; but surely we may guess!"—*Letters of a Suffolk Juror.*

"I have heard a Guardian of the Bath Union, a Rev. Mr. Spencer, state, at a Temperance Meeting, that he knew a workhouse, not a hundred miles from Bath, the schoolmaster of which had been discovered to be so addicted to drinking, that he had been seen several times very nearly to fall from his chair through intoxication while reading prayers to the paupers, besides having been repeatedly seen in a state of intoxication at other times. It is well known in what Union this happened, and also that this most unfit instructor of youth is still retained in his post. Only a few days ago this schoolmaster came home in such a state of intoxication, as to beat one or more boys, while in bed, so cruelly about the head, with some large keys which he had in his hand, that, to use the expression of the person who mentioned it to me, 'the blood ran all over the bedding.' Every endeavour, I find, has been made by the Master and other officers in the said workhouse to conceal the circumstance."—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath), in the "Times,"* Sept. 15, 1840.

"We resume the subject of the Bath workhouse investigations of January, 1839. Our readers will recollect, that in the first stage of this affair, when charges were made against Mr. Laurence, the then Master of the Bath Union workhouse, by a person who had been employed as his clerk, and privately investigated by the Board of Guardians, one-half of those charges, imputing to him habitual neglect of his routine duties, systematic falsification of accounts, and non-attendance at Divine service, was admitted by himself to be well founded; and that, nevertheless, Mr. Laurence was continued in his office, almost without a reprimand; while the

virtuous indignation of the Guardians vented itself in a bitter attack upon the motives of his accuser. Neither will they have forgotten, that when out of fourteen other charges subsequently made against the same person, and referred for investigation to Mr. Commissioner Adey, three became the subjects of actual inquiry. Mr. Laurence was acquitted of the first, being a charge of incontinence, because the principal witness's testimony, though clear, consistent, and uncontradicted, would have been insufficient (in the judgment of the Poor-Law Commissioners,) to insure his conviction by a jury in a legal trial for rape: that he was acquitted of the second, being a charge of dishonesty, because it appeared that, upon the eve of the inquiry, he had paid over money which he had improperly retained for eleven months: that he was convicted of the third, being a charge of cruelty, but protected from 'ulterior consequences,' because it appeared that *the Board of Guardians had made themselves accomplices in his cruelty by their subsequent approbation!*"—*Times*, Sept. 15, 1840.

"At the late meeting of the Brighton Board of Guardians, the following resolution was passed—That the Governor be ordered to have a joint of meat ready by three o'clock for the refreshment of the Board of Guardians and Directors."—*Hereford County Press*, Nov. 11, 1837.

"I began to fancy, a few days ago, that the Commissioners had, at length, found out their error. A long manifesto was issued by penny-a-liner Chadwick, stating, that an overseer would be made accountable, if real destitution should be neglected; that relief in kind should be administered in all cases whatsoever. This appeared something like relaxation; but my exultation was short. How do you think they mean to get over this? You say, 'Oh! I don't know—I can't guess!!' Why, in future there are to be '*No Overseers.*' There is no outthinking these Commissioners. These Commissioners said that no person in the "House" should have the least bounty from out-door friends; but now I find in the Dover Union, 'through the intercession of the Members of Parliament, a *penny subscription* is allowed to be entered into in the town, to supply the poor with *tea and sugar in the House!* What contortions this poor rickety law is making previous to amendment or dissolution!"—*The Suffolk Juror*.

"We are informed that the Poor-Law Commissioners have suggested to the

Board of Guardians of the Tendring Union, that those surgeons only should be employed for the Union as would give the sick poor 'no mutton.'"—*Essex Standard*, Dec., 1838.

"The Duke of Richmond, on the score of '*want of means,*' allowed Baron Kierulff, the aid-de-camp of his gallant father, and who saved his life at Waterloo, to die of want and misery in Kennington workhouse."—*Vide "Bell's Old Weekly Messenger"* of Nov. 26, 1837; "*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*" of July 7, 1838; and "*Frazer's Magazine.*"

"The Queen has been pleased to present the Rev. H. Owen, the Chairman of the Hoxne Union (whose exertions for the establishment of the New Poor-Law have been frequently noticed), to the Rectory of Haveringham, Suffolk, vacant by the death of the Rev. Anthony Colletts."—*Globe*, March 16, 1838.

"The Poor-Law Commissioners have told the public, that the destitute poor have only to apply for relief, and it will be instantly afforded. But the constant practice of buffeting the applicants from parish to parish gives the lie, day by day, to such a statement. Look at the conduct pursued towards the applicant; he is told 'he does not belong—apply where he does.' There he is told 'he does not reside—he must get passed;' thus neither will relieve him. I have been called upon to interfere in many heartrending cases of this description, and I am satisfied that many die of starvation before, or immediately after, they obtain access even to a workhouse."—*Day's "Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law."*

"Was there not a public meeting in Morpeth only a few days ago, at which resolutions were passed by the acclamations of hundreds of respectable people, of all political opinions, that the Guardians were a *set of reprobates and heathens?*"—*Blakey's "Controversial Letters with the Morpeth Board,"* 1837.

"For anything the law says to the contrary, the Commissioners could hang a score or two of persons at any time without judge or jury, provided such executions were considered favourable to the establishment of the Act."—*Ibid.*

"The '*Bastardy*' Clauses could only have proceeded from one who, like your Lordship, could have the hardihood to vilify and calumniate the females of England, and to claim, at the same time, for your daughter, the possession of all the virtues that adorn human nature! You



have, my Lord, good cause to be thankful that you are able to get over the surface of England otherwise than by walking, or your defamation of the *female* character would long ago have cost you your nose; and, mayhap, your *head* may have been disposed to follow so prominent a part.”—*Anti-Malthusian Bloodsucker's* “*Letter to Lord Brougham.*”

“The Relieving Officers are, in general, men having no other means of existence, and who take the office because they have no hope of a better; and being but *one* remove from pauperism themselves, are no protection whatever to the poor. No name could, I think, have been devised so opposite to the duties of those functionaries. In many cases they are employed in finding out on what grounds, real or imaginary, relief can be withheld; and are accounted *clever* according to the amount of their recklessness in the withholding or refusing relief.”—*Ibid.*

“A man, his wife, and two children, were in a Union-House. Work was offered to the man, and he was desired to take himself and family out. He wanted some trifling allowance to go out with, as he could receive no wages in less than *thirty hours*. It was moved by a Guardian, a highly-respectable man of the poor man's parish, that one stone of flour should be given to this poor family. A Commissioner, who was present, and who fancies himself a gentleman, because he is put into authority, and who is sacking £1,500 *a-year* from the public, for salary and travelling expenses, said, ‘I am amused, very much amused indeed! I recommend that we all set up a *horse laugh*!’ This bright recommendation was disregarded, and this Solomon of £1,500 *a-year* was the only one who could horse-laugh over this motion of a humane Guardian, to supply the necessities of four fellow-creatures: they had *not* the flour!”—*The Suffolk Juror.*

“There is something horribly unfeeling and sordid in witnessing a body of men publicly demanding *sealed* tenders respecting the price at which the poor man's coffin is to be furnished, and accompanied with a minute specification of the thickness required for its head, and foot, and sides, and lid, and also that proper security be given for the due and faithful performance of the contract! It is impossible to witness a public proclamation of this kind in print, without feeling emotions of supreme disgust towards those mean wretches who thus openly outrage every solemn and

sacred tie of brotherhood among mankind. Such economists must be really bad men; they cannot have a single particle of honourable feeling flowing in their veins: they must, in one word, be nature's hangmen.”—*Blakey's* “*General Principles of Parochial Relief.*”

“The Guardian has no power in his own parish; well then put him down 0; but we have two Guardians, then put them down 00; but there are forty-eight Guardians in the Union; well what are forty-eight noughts together worth? Why just as much as one 0, and nothing more; still they look prettily all in a row, like the ‘tim-bobbins’ in a pianoforte; but then the *ex-officios* ought to be a little bigger perhaps, because they sometimes go to Court with two-thousand-pounds-a-year Lewis. You see the Commissioners take care to have a captain for their noughts, and then the noughts stand for something, but little or big, a nought without a unit, is a nought and nothing more. Still these 0's will do to string wires to for the three Commissioners to play upon, and to strike up and down as the ‘tim-bobbins’ skip up and down in a pianoforte. But it has been hinted to me that something might be done to soften the law by electing humane Guardians. .... We know that George Colman, the younger, in his ‘Fire Poker,’ set Vulcan to work to make Pandora with iron; and she was a beautiful creature.

‘The Cyclops only know what stuff  
Was work'd on, by a god so rough,  
To thump and pommel into shape, a maid,  
So tender, and so young.’

But we do not want beauty; we want strong and substantial *ciphers*, and as hammered iron is expensive, and economy is the life and soul of the New Poor-Law, and as a great many Guardians will be required, and directly too, surely they may be cast-iron. They must be heavy, nothing ‘*rated*’ less than *thirty-five pounders* will be allowed to pass! They might be cast *soft* towards the Commissioners, and *hard* towards the poor! and the *ex-officio* might be made a little stouter, and polished for better company at times, for my Lord Little John is going to send a sergeant of seven years' standing to play upon them every six weeks, and at the Sessions!”—*The Suffolk Juror.*

“The Poor-Law Commissioners have, however, not yet attempted to carry the law out to the extent intended, particularly in the metropolis and large towns, knowing, no doubt, that in attempting to do so

they must raise against themselves and the law such a storm of public opposition and indignation as would, probably, prevent the renewal of their lease. The public should, therefore, beware that they are not deceived and cajoled with reference to this law; neither let them suppose when the wily and interested supporters of the 'Act' refer to the comforts of the poor in certain poor-law unions, that it is a proof of the kindly working of the 'Act' itself—mostly quite the contrary, because it is a fact well known to the Poor-Law Commissioners themselves, that in some unions almost every act done by the Guardians is contrary to the New Law, and directly at variance with the rules, orders, and regulations of those Commissioners. To prove this fact, I need only refer to my own parish, St. George's, Southwark, with a population of about fifty thousand. In 1836, I acted as a Guardian here, and am so again this year; but were not the Poor-Law regulations entirely laid aside, and the bad parts of the law set completely at defiance, I would not remain so for one hour."—*Day's "Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law."*

"If the Poor-Law be applicable to the county of Northumberland, which I much doubt, it is not applicable to the county of Suffolk. He (Lord Howick, Debate, Feb. 20, 1838) says that the Law has enabled a man, who keeps a cow or two, to get work. Happy consummation, truly! I don't chance to know a poor person who can keep a cow or two. We have had no such poor persons in this place. The law we want, is a law to enable a poor man, when out of work, to get a meal or two without going to a Bastile."—*The Suffolk Juror.*

"The New Poor-Law could be defended on the soundest principles, and was framed in the purest spirit of constitutional freedom and regard for the poor and their rights. ....It was carried out in the kindest spirit, not towards the landowner, but towards the poor... ....There was not a single harsh or oppressive power given to it.....He could not believe, without proof, that it did not tend to raise the character, as well as to increase the comforts of the poor.....It was false that the Commissioners had ever prohibited out-door relief; on the contrary, it was continued by them in all cases where the Relieving Officers saw fit to give it; and out-door relief was denied to no one who was fairly entitled to receive it."—*Lord Brougham, House of Lords.*

"Another charge I brought against the

Morpeth Board, at a public meeting, was that of DRUNKENNESS. Now if Sir John Walsam (the Assistant-Commissioner) will give me indemnity against civil damages, I will tell him and the public who have been drunk at the Board."—*Blakey's "Controversial Letters with the Morpeth Board."*

"At Oldham they could not get men to fill so disgraceful an office as that of a Guardian."—*Mr. L. Pitkethley at the Huddersfield Board, April, 1840.*

"We must mention the constant attention paid by Relieving Officers to the whims, prejudices, and supposed interests of the Guardians. These men must be conciliated at all risks, because by them they live, and move, and have their being; and, therefore, special care is always taken never to let the interests or wants of the poor stand in competition for a single moment with the wishes, opinions, or private views of the Guardians. When we look at the kind of character which commonly constitutes the body of Relieving Officers, this state of things will not appear at all unnatural or exaggerated. They are, in nine cases out of ten, broken down in reputation, in habits, and in principles; they must have a total absence of good feeling from their daily waging war with the tender and benevolent sympathies of our nature; they must have a goodly stock of low cunning, and they soon learn, from their wandering habits, to become drunken tipplers; and, above all, they must possess two requisites, which do of themselves embody nearly everything detestable in human nature—namely, a slavish sycophancy to those above them, and a tyrannical spirit to those beneath them. How often do we view, in the meetings of the Boards of Guardians, these miserable wretches fawning, like well-beaten spaniels, bowing, simpering, and scraping, and seeming anxious for the honour of licking the very dust from off the shoes of their masters; but, in the twinkling of an eye, when duty calls them to appear among the helpless crowd of people their own undue officiousness has brought to the Board, we again see these officers metamorphosed into the most odious tyrants, lowering their brows, and scattering their reproaches indiscriminately among the nervous and shattered applicants for relief. I feel confident, had our Milton seen such official characters in his own day, he never would have thought, in sketching the ground-plan of his *Paradise Lost*, of elevating Satan into



the regions of air, to discuss with his myrmidons how to inflict the greatest amount of misery upon the human race; but the poet would have made the Devil take up his abode among a *posse* of Relieving Officers of the New Poor-Law, where ample and ready-made materials would have been found by his satanic majesty for all the mischiefs which his inventive spirit could create for marring the happiness and debasing the character of fallen men."—*Blakey's "General Principles of Parochial Relief."*

"This Lord Brougham, who so powerfully supported the Bill, and who has so lately advocated, with his usual tact and consummate eloquence, the cause of the poor, unhappy negroes, said, when the Poor-Law "*Amendment*" Act was under discussion, that the man was *not* to be separated from his wife, nor were the children to be separated from either; that no one had ever said such a thing, and he questioned if any one had ever '*dreamed*' of such a thing; and yet we are wide awake, and find that this is carried into an unnatural, inhuman effect; and let it be for ever engraven on the memory; let it never be forgotten by any man, that there is an express clause in the Negro Act to prevent this inhumanity to the West-Indian slaves!—'*No slave shall be parted from his wife, nor the children from either!*' There, you Poor-Law advocates, match such rascality as that if you can!"—*The Suffolk Juror.*

"A few days ago his Grace (of Wellington) and the Right Hon. Charles Arbuthnot paid a visit to the village of Eastry, and inspected the Union workhouse, with all the arrangements of which, as well as the *comfortable* condition of the pauper inmates, he expressed himself *highly gratified.*"—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Sept. 26, 1840.

"It has been asserted that the Guardians (who, by-the-by, can only act agreeably to the will of the Poor-Law Commissioners, as their tools) are the representatives of the rate-payers, but such an assertion will be seldom found to be correct, for the Guardians are generally appointed under the system of plural-proxy voting of owners, such owners having *four, five, or six votes*, while the tenant, paying the rates, has only *one*. Besides this, they can be elected or returned by some two or three individuals alone, and that in large parishes, for many persons are known to hold several hundred votes by proxy, and thus in most

instances it will be found that the Guardians are returned and appointed in opposition and against the will of those who pay. There is also the right of all resident magistrates to sit as Guardians, who, in some cases, have been known to out-number the elected Guardians."—*Day's "Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law."*

"What can these Somerset-house gentlemen be expected to know about the poor of this country? They do not mix with the productive classes, and can only form their notions from the statements of Assistant-Commissioners and others, idlers like themselves, who have large salaries at stake, and whose luxuries and subsistence depend upon the support and maintenance of their darling scheme of oppression. This will probably account for the libellous reports these *gentlemen* publish against the poor, perhaps for want of knowing better. They told us, in 1836, the poor could not be trusted out of the workhouse prisons to go to church on Sundays, for they would get intoxicated. Now we have allowed this to our poor for nearly two years and a-half, against the will of these Commissioners, and our experience, up to this time, gives the lie to their theoretical and wicked libels against those who have no power to defend themselves. Here and there only has a case of the kind occurred, although as many as 150 have gone out at a time."—*Ibid.*

"That there is no length the Poor-Law Commissioners will not go, in the plenitude of their extraordinary powers, to carry out the New Law, may be seen from the fact, that when the Guardians happen to be generally opposed to their arbitrary proceedings, they say *they can hold the acts of the minority to be binding and legal against the majority who are opposed to them!*"—*Ibid.*

"Let us suppose that the Guardians of some Union are found to be, as is, unfortunately, too often the case, the willing tools of the Commissioners; that, in enforcing the rules, &c., of these said Commissioners, the most serious consequences are likely to ensue, by starving the poor, or goading them on to madness. Complaint is made to some justice of the peace, and he summons the Overseer to attend. The case is gone into, and the justice, being convinced of the impropriety and injustice of the course the Guardians are pursuing, orders the Overseer to do such things as he (the justice) thinks

right and lawful, but such things as the 'rules, regulations, and orders,' may not warrant. And when he has issued his orders, the Overseer, with a sneer of contempt, pulls out of his pocket an abstract of the 'Poor-Law Amendment-Act,' and reads the justice a lesson from the 96th clause, closes the book, and struts insultingly away."—*Anti-Malthusian Blood-sucker*.

"Since the superintendence of the vaccination of the people was committed to the Poor-Law Commissioners, the weekly deaths from small-pox have increased from 6 to 66; since they began to take sanitary measures for the winter season, the fatal effects of cold have augmented the weekly mortality in the ratio of 20 per cent."—*Times*, Dec. 21, 1840.

"The primary advocates and patrons of this dangerous delegation of power (the Poor-Law Commission) appear now to quail and tremble before the work of their own hands, and seem to feel that they have put in motion a principle in legislation, which, if allowed to exist at all, will of necessity be constantly seeking to extend itself, to the irreparable injury of the Commonwealth, and to the dishonour of the Crown."—*The Rev. G. S. Bull's Petition to the House of Lords*, May 30, 1838.

"Propose to revise the pension list—crowded as it was with titled vice, and degenerate nobility—panders to corruption and the basest passions; and we have the ministers of a reformed Government interposing their perverted sympathies, and pleading for their relatives and friends, whom they fastened upon the state, and whom they would be compelled to support, but for this dastardly perversion of the people's treasures. But they do not hesitate to send forth their hired Commissioners to revise the house list of a parish, who wring from the decrepid matron, tottering upon the threshold of her final home, even her paltry allowance of a shilling, and tell her she can no longer be allowed to receive it, except as the inmate of a dungeon—breathing the polluted air of vice, derangement, and disease. Is this the humanity of a reform cabinet?"—*Mr. D. Whittle Harvey's Speech at the Southwark Anti-New Poor-Law Meeting*, Aug. 23, 1836.

"It was not until the landlord found somebody must be plundered, or he could not get his rent, that Government thought of revising the Poor-Laws. The tenant said he could not bear up against the

united burden of tithes, rent, and poor-rates. Now, the first two could not be touched—they are sacred—but the poor man, however numerous his class, is feeble and disregarded, without representatives, and, out of his own pale, without friends. He, therefore, was the object of heartless assault. But the heartless contrivance would recoil upon those who devised it. The time would come when the sturdy arm would lay bare the degenerate scheme which has placed all the poor at the mercy of a hired despotism, giving to them no home but in a gaol; breaking down all the generous distinctions of manly independence, and crawling crime—between the lay pauper and his compatriot, the pensioned peer—and him who stands forth in the vigour of high-minded independence; and, proud in the attribute of manhood, demands protection from the storms and vicissitudes of his eventful being."—*Ibid*.

"A Poor-Law Commissioner is regarded by the rate-payer as an intruder, and by the poor as a barbarian—a concentrated iceberg, without heart, without feeling, without humanity—a creature without Christianity; a tyrant without restraint; a despotic demon."—*Ibid*.

"The Commissioners, to whom the legislature have delegated the power of making laws, have declared in their *Second Report*, that 'No doubt can be entertained that it was the deliberate intention of Parliament, in framing the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, that all out-door relief to the able-bodied should cease at the earliest period—that it could safely and with propriety be put an end to:' and in the same Report these Commissioners also say, that this 'is in fact the main object of the Act; and in their *Third Report* they pronounce, 'that the strict workhouse principle requires, that all the members of a family, claiming relief, should enter the house and give up their property for the benefit of the parish.'"—*The Rev. Mr. Bull's Petition to the House of Lords*.

"The poor of this country are mostly an improvident, lazy, sluggardly, and self-gratifying class, who marry recklessly, never thinking of those whom they brought into misery and degradation—marry on speculation, in the assurance that they should live to prolong their worthless, ignominious, lazy existences, at the expense of the earnings of the industrious community."—*Lord Brougham's Speech on the passing of the New Poor-Law*, 1834.



"The poor man's daughter pursues her calculations, she gratifies her passions."—*Ibid.*

"By the 42d and other clauses of the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act, the Commissioners are empowered to make rules, orders, and regulations relating to workhouses and to the relief of the poor, 'which shall be observed and obeyed (quoth the act) as if the same were specifically embodied in the Act;' and that all such rules, orders, and regulations may at any time, by the will of the commissioners, be '*suspended, varied, altered, and rescinded*;' and that there are also several pains and penalties attached, by the 98th clause, to 'any contempt of such Commissioners sitting as a board,' or to any wilful disobedience of their 'orders.'" —G. R. W. B.

"When Lord Brougham first proposed the adoption of the Poor-Law Commission, he spoke of it as a commission to be invested with '*large discretionary powers, an arbitrary discretion, ample and unconfined*.'"—*Vide Lord Brougham's Speeches*, pp. 47, 48.

"Mr. Assistant Commissioner Power has declared that separation of man and wife is *not* illegal; and that he never heard an argument broached against its legality."—*Twelfth Report of the Poor-Law Inquiry before the House of Commons*.

"The old poor-laws were abused, because maladministered. But the tree is not rotten or in decay because in autumn its foliage grows yellow and dies off. The system was still sound at the core; it was founded on natural rights and had been consecrated by social covenants;—humanity presided at its birth—by consummate wisdom it was fostered into strength and fair proportions. The nation had waxed great, the middle classes prospered, the poor were contented under it. But as the Whig-Radicals changed the constitution to gain votes, so they conspired against poor-laws because the poor had none—*point d'argent, point de Suisse*. The fate of the old poor-laws was foredoomed in the composition of the preliminary board for inquiry—in the selection of the assistant tools for procuring and moulding evidence wherewith to bolster up a foregone conclusion. The Grand Inquisition, with its familiars, was the veritable incarnation of the barbarous political economy of the day. The satellites sallied forth under banners emblazoned with the hideous spectre of redundant popu-

lation—their mission was to survey the land and cut down the excess. Merciless as Procrustes himself, their theory was unstretching and unaccommodating as his bed. The mass was measured, and the superabundant victims adjusted by it. At one end they were lopped off by the premium on infanticide, and at the other, by the workhouse system. The axe of the one was whetted by bastardy clauses, of the other sharpened by starvation diet and the horrors of imprisonment. Such was the origin, such were the parents, such the intents, such the achievements, of the Poor-Law Abolition-Bill. Not one friendly voice represented in the commission the interests or feelings of the poor—none was found to cry, *God bless them!* A case was got up to justify oppression by means of garbled testimony and one-sided depositions. The Assistant, or touring Commissioner, was officially instructed to '*use his own discretion*' as to the places which appear to be most deserving of investigation, and *as to the points of inquiry* which may be most successfully investigated.' The licence was used in all its latitude. Lawyers real and lawyers nominal, of the class of lacklanders, who had studied the poor only in the assize calendar or in police courts, transformed paupers into felons, and represented poverty as a crime. The grand inquest of the nation found a true bill upon the *ex parte* allegations of witnesses so partial and corrupt. Corrupt and partial they were, for the prize of place and salary was contingent on the case to be got up—a prospective premium was held out for the most varied and apposite collection of distorted facts and the boldest perversion of reasoning. The competition was great, for golden was the reward; so exceptions were hunted out and multiplied sufficiently to pass muster for the rule—reports were manufactured to establish, in conformity, a general principle—finally, the pains of parturition concluded with that monstrous birth of Whig-Radical legislation most comprehensively understood as the workhouse system." — "*Blackwood's Magazine*," April, 1837.

"We shall not dwell on the frauds practised by the Commissioners to impose upon public credulity, with pretended abuses of the old, and forged or strained eulogiums of the new system. Among others, the parish of Cholesbury figured in the report of the ambulant tribe, and in the speeches of Lord John, as damning

proof of the property-swallowing qualities of the act of Elizabeth—"All the farms of the parish," we were warned with impressive repetition and awful solemnity, had gone out of cultivation under the old system." This darling and selected parish, it turns out, consists of 110 acres only, with two farms of 50 acres each!!!!—*Ibid.*

"The Commissioners have declared that, for the due administration of this exterminating decree, *stern, unflinching, and unfeeling* executors (*executioners*, they should have said) are the best and the only qualified tools."—*Ibid.*

"GUARDIANS.—The local Board of Guardians, which by the workhouse system has been created, is the mere slave, and not the delegation of the central despotism. It is a body without vitality—a corporation without power—official without functions—having option and volition none, save to register the decrees which emanate from the triune tyranny of Somerset-house. Men who servilely consent to accept the style and title of guardians, without one single right or privilege to the care and superintendence of the poor, must stand degraded in self esteem, as they are in public opinion. The Government has invested them with no trust, the people repose in them no confidence. They are the ostensible agents of oppression, which they have not sanctioned, but are powerless to qualify; they are the helpless utensil for the reception of that popular execration, which, unshared, might suddenly overwhelm the workhouse system with all its authors and abominations."—*Ibid.*

"The mouthpiece of the Whig ministry and the Poor-Law Commission, Lord Brougham, then Lord High Chancellor of England, and the fountain-head of law if not of justice, did, with all the imposing gravity of the highest office, and from the highest judgment-seat in the realm, pronounce first the nonexpediency of poor-laws, and the advantages to be derived by sweeping away every vestige of them hereafter from the statute-book; and next the keeper of his Majesty's conscience did not only doubt, but resolutely deny, the existence of any rights of the able-bodied poor to relief."—*Blackwood's Magazine*, June, 1837.

"The *Morning Chronicle* will spare two columns for a Poor-Law Commissioner at any time."—*Daniel O'Connell*.

"We have read portions of the Report of an Assistant-Commissioner, now offi-

cially known under another designation, with mingled feelings of disgust and contempt. The reasoning about 'independent labourers and paupers,'—the 'means by which the fund for their subsistence is to be reproduced,' &c., &c., is just as trashy as might be expected in a penny-a-liner; and the spirit which seasons the whole, savours strongly of conclusions drawn from the habit of witnessing and recording the scenes of gin-drinking broils, petty larcenies, squalor, filth, and pauper misery daily exhibited at Bow-street and the Mansion-house."—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

"The cry is and has been that poor-rates and paupers are on the increase, that they are evils 'every year and every day becoming more overwhelming in magnitude and less susceptible of cure;' and Lord Brougham went the length of asserting, that all property would be swallowed up by them. But relatively to the population it is evident that pauperism *has not been on the increase*, but rather the reverse, the numbers relieved having varied only between eight and twelve in 100, during a period of 140 years. The increase per cent of the poor's maintenance, in quarters of wheat, Winchester measure, which in 1820, as compared with 1803, was 47 per cent., was no more in 1830, as contrasted with 1820, than two one-seventh per cent."—*Vide Nimmo's "Tables," Parliamentary Papers*, 1830, and *Blackwood's "Magazine," April*, 1837.

THE DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSIONERS.—"To make and issue Rules, Orders, and Regulations, and at their discretion to suspend, alter, or rescind them."—*New Poor-Law Act*, page 11.

"In case any person shall wilfully neglect or disobey any of the rules, orders, or regulations, of the said Commissioners or Assistant-Commissioners, or be guilty of any contempt of the said Commissioners sitting as a Board, such person shall, upon conviction before any two justices, forfeit and pay for the first offence, any sum not exceeding five pounds, for the second offence any sum not exceeding twenty pounds, nor less than five, and in the event of such person being convicted a third time, such third and every subsequent offence shall be deemed a misdemeanor, and such offender shall be liable to be indicted for the same offence, and shall on conviction pay such fine, not being less than twenty pounds, and suffer such



imprisonment, with or without hard labour, as may be awarded against him by the court by or before which he shall be tried and convicted."—*Ibid.*, page 91.

"Commissioners may, when they shall think proper, either upon or without any suggestion or complaint from overseers or guardians, remove any paid officer of any parish or union whom they shall deem unfit or incompetent."—*Ibid.*, page 51.

"All rules, orders, and regulations, from time to time made by Commissioners under the authority of this Act, to be valid and binding; and are to be obeyed and observed as if the same were specifically made by this Act and embodied in it."—*Ibid.*, page 45.

"Commissioners and Assistant-Commissioners are empowered to administer oaths, and to require, and enforce upon oath, the production of books, contracts, agreements, accounts, and writings, or copies thereof, in anywise relating to the administration of the poor-laws."—*Ibid.*, page 2.

"Without consent of Guardians and Overseers being required, Commissioners may order and direct Overseers and Guardians of parishes or Unions having workhouses, or buildings capable of being converted into workhouses, to enlarge or alter the same, according to such plan and in such manner as the Commissioners shall deem proper."—*Ibid.*, page 20.

"Commissioners empowered to direct and control the building, altering, and enlarging of workhouses; the purchasing, hiring, holding, selling, &c., of land, wherever the same may have been, or may be hereafter erected; the dieting, clothing, employing, and governing of the poor; the preparing of houses for the reception of the said poor persons; the raising or borrowing money for any of the aforesaid purposes; and for repaying the same. They are also empowered to make rules, &c., to be enforced and observed at every workhouse already established, and every workhouse hereafter to be established; for the government thereof, and the nature and amount of relief to be given to persons relieved,—the labour to be enacted for them—the preservation of good order therein (the workhouses); for the education of children in workhouses; and from time to time to suspend, alter, or rescind the same rules, &c., and make others in their place."—*New Poor-Law Act*, pages 11, 16, 17, 44.

"Commissioners may, as they may see fit, declare a Union, whether formed before

or after this Act, to be dissolved—or any specified parishes to be separated from, or added to, any Union."—*Ibid.*, page 30.

"Power to Commissioners to declare to what extent, and for what period relief to able-bodied persons and their families may be administered out of the workhouse."—*Ibid.*, page 54.

"Power to Commissioners to make and issue rules, &c., for the apprenticing of poor children; for the guidance and control of Guardians, vestries, and parish officers, &c."—*Ibid.*, page 11.

"The only ground on which relief ought to be afforded was that of destitution, and then only so much as would sustain nature. The deserving were entitled to this much and no more, and the worthless and undeserving to no less."—*Lord John Russell per Mr. Phillips, Under-Secretary*, 1836.

"At Bulkington, in Warwickshire, the proportion of pregnant women married among the poor, is not less than 19 out of every 20; at Beckenhill in the same county, ditto; at Nuneaton, 17 out of every 20; and in other instances clergymen have related that four-fifths, and 49 out of every 50 marriages they have been called upon to perform, have been females who were either with child or had been."—*Commissioners' 1st Report*, page 175.

"What alteration can you suggest in the Bastardy Laws? By refusing to give any order upon the father for support, or upon the parish even. I would throw the onus entirely upon the woman."—*Ibid.*, page 176.

"Where cases of real hardship occur, the remedy must be applied by individual charity, a virtue for which no system of compulsory relief can be or ought to be a substitute."—*Ibid.*, page 263.

"It may be safely affirmed, that the virtue of female chastity does not exist among the lower orders of England, except to a certain extent among domestic female servants."—*Mr. Cowell's Report*, 1833.

"Pregnancy precedes marriage."—*Ibid.*

"If there were any uncertainty upon our minds as to the character of the Somerset-house tyranny, that uncertainty would be removed by one very clear and very important feature in the manner in which the triumvirate deal with those who force them to inquire. Take the instance of the Rev. Mr. Watts of Bath. In reporting to the Commissioners the revolting treatment of Rebecca Collett, a woman

supposed to be with child, who was confined through the night in a damp stone dungeon, without even a straw to lie upon, for a most trifling offence, he discharged a plain duty, the neglect of which would have utterly disqualified him for the situation he held. How did the Commissioners act? They sent down a white-washer, who placed not the Master of the workhouse, but Mr. Watts himself, upon his trial, required him to prove, not the substance of his own statement, but that the poor woman's health had actually suffered in consequence of the ill-treatment she received, and in default of such proof Mr. Watts was discharged from his situation of Union-Chaplain."—*Times*, August 25, 1840.

"What the Somerset-house despotism does, it does clearly and thoroughly; while it lasts it is able to stifle and trample down the resistance of those whom it oppresses; it can send out its polypus feelers into Cornwall, or Northumberland, or Wales, without receiving the slightest impression from that which is peculiar in the circumstances of person or place. Whatever horrors may be enacted at any point in the circle of operation, whatever atmosphere of moral indignation those horrors may originate within their immediate sphere, neither the horror nor the indignation come in contact with the central intelligence, or influence its secret motions. What might be calculated, if actually witnessed, to excite human feelings in the hardest heart, will be coldly or contemptuously disregarded when reported from a distant, and possibly from a suspected, quarter. The conceit of theory, the arrogance of power, the determination to persevere in that to which they stand committed, and for which they are deeply responsible, make men resolve to believe only so much of what they hear, as their effrontery is willing to aver, or their sophistry able to explain away. In everything appears a deliberate resolution to bolster up their own system at every possible sacrifice, a deep hatred of inquiry, and a vindictive malice against those who make inquiry unavoidable."—*Times*, August 25, 1840.

"During my opposition to the Poor-Law Amendment Bill (in the House of Commons), I positively asserted that printed instructions had been given to the barrister who drew up the bill, for his guidance, by the ministers, Lords Grey, Brougham, Althorp, Russell, &c.—That those instructions expressly stated, 'that

one thing desirable to be accomplished was, to bring the people of England to live on a coarser sort of diet!' That I moved for the laying of those instructions on the table of the House; that neither Lord Althorp, nor any other man in the House, said one word in contradiction to my statement; but that the minister and his majority, contented themselves with silently voting, and *rejecting the motion!* A change of circumstances now enables me to say I had seen the 'instructions.'"—*Cobbett's 'Legacy to Labourers.'*"

"The keeper of a workhouse in a western city, convicted of all but a capital offence on the person of a female pauper, and on his own confession found guilty of peculation and general malversation of office, was lately acquitted by the Somerset-house Board, and retained in his situation. At Crediton, where an investigation into charges of gross cruelty, indecency, and oppression of the inmates of the workhouse, was demanded, and at first granted, has been stifled by two Assistant-Commissioners, with a barefaced defiance of ordinary decorum, and a violation of plighted word, that we have never seen exceeded. The consequence has been the resignation of the Chairman and whole Board of Guardians, and we are now coolly threatened by Mr. Edwin Chadwick with paid Guardians to execute the mandates of the Commissioners."—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Sept. 19, 1840.

"The immorality promoted by the Poor-Law Amendment system every day becomes more glaring. We have received accounts this week of the dismissal of the Governor of the South Moulton Bastile. On the 20th inst., the Guardians assembled to investigate a charge against Roger Leach, the said Governor, for carrying on an adulterous intercourse with Elizabeth Holmes, a pauper inmate, who is now pregnant by him. He was dismissed. Several other inmates were eager to make charges before the Guardians, as soon as they found they had no further reason to dread Leach's resentment. In some cases his lustful overtures had been resisted, but in others his will had been yielded to. A pretty commentary is this on the morality of separating married couples who may fall into distress. Another correspondent informs us of the dismissal of Stanton, the Master of the Atherstone Union-house. He was charged with getting drunk, absenting himself from duty, and bursting open the door of the Matron's bed-room in the night-time. He admits,



we understand, having had an improper intimacy with a female pauper named Wood, who is supposed to be pregnant by him. Stanton defended himself by alleging that the Matron had voluntarily slept with him twelve nights. This she most solemnly denied, and from her previous character the Guardians gave no credit whatever to the accusation, and he was dismissed on the 9th instant.”—*Weekly Dispatch*, Feb. 28, 1841.

“Colonel Sibthorp would remind the hon. gentleman who had just spoken of a very trite and common-place saying, but nevertheless a very good one, that the ‘proof of the pudding is in the eating.’ (*Laughter.*) He had seen nothing on the part of the Government to make him believe they had the least sympathy with the poor. (*Hear, hear.*) And what he should like to have seen was, that this Poor-Law Continuance Bill was ordered to be read a second time that day six months. The ministers preferred their places and their pockets to the feelings of the poor, and they would connive at any trick to secure them. (*Laughter.*) He had seen but one feeling on their part, and that was for themselves—and a very strong feeling it was. (*Great laughter.*) But the opposition to this measure was general; he could hardly take up a newspaper without finding that some great meeting had assembled to deprecate this Algerine Act. The poor, however, would get very few good things from her Majesty’s ministers in that House, and, as he believed, very few halfpence from them in the streets.” (*Roars of Laughter.*)—*House of Commons*, March 8, 1841.

“The most horrible of all horrible things relating to the advocates of the bill is, that there are few, very few indeed, among the clergy, who are not really *professed advocates* of it. Nay, the numbers are far, very far, from being few, who are *Guardians*—enforcers of a decree to dethrone God. Dukes, and lords, and patrons, are supporters of the decree, and therefore what availeth it with such mercenaries that the *Lord of lords*, and even the *King of kings* is against it? He may have, and He *has* a faithful phalanx left, which have not bowed the knee to Mammon, but its name is not *legion*. Oh! what a precious turmoil would there have been among the *dry bones*, had a bill been passed, laying a ten per cent. tax on all the Church livings throughout England and Wales! And yet how much more just, how much more

legal, how much more politic and productive, how much less expensive, how much less afflictive, how much less destructive, would *that* have been, than the Poor-Law Amendment Act is. The clergy might (and would) have *talked* loud. There would not have been *one* of those (never to be layed) millions of spirits of vengeance (the Chartists) which the voice of Lord John Russell has called, and is still calling, from the vasty deep. No, not one of these would have appeared, to demand the thousands of soldiers, of constables, and of policemen, to be spread all over the nation, trying, in vain, to keep them down..... Give me leave to ask (a not unimportant question) should these offspring of the New Poor-Law, either in their present or any other name, gain the ascendancy, would it not be a fair retaliation in them to send out Commissioners to inquire into the value of all livings, with the number, income, duty, character, and usefulness, of each individual clergyman, for the purpose of laying a full report of the result of the investigation, preparatory to a more economical, equitable, and useful arrangement of the whole. I much fear that this investigation which they have provoked, both from God and man, would not redound much to either their profit or credit. They may say that they were not either the traducers or the oppressors of the poor, (I have this day seen the report of a cruel case of death in a Union workhouse palliated by the Guardians, the majority of whom were *clergymen*) so might have said the *priest* who looked upon the wounded traveller and passed him by, leaving him half dead. To whom can the poor look for protection and comfort, if not to the servants of Him who never forsook them? ..... Churches are building in abundance all over the land. For that purpose, the legislature, the nobles, the great and the rich, freely contribute—nay, they and the clergy make a great merit of insisting on having much room in each for *benches* for the *poor* to sit upon, and this at the very time that they are commanding prisons (Test and Pest Houses) in all parts of the kingdom, as large as churches, to be filled with the poorest and often the most worthy of the poor—not for having committed any crime, but solely for that which God and Christ command all men to pity and comfort them—POVERTY. From these Mammonitish prisons they are not allowed (in poverty, affliction, and old age) to enter, even on

the Sabbath-day, those churches in which they are insulted by having seats assigned to them. Whether there be more of idiotism or wickedness in this, I cannot tell—there is enough of both. Church-building, I fear, savours more of earth than heaven. It has been shown to be quite compatible with the most horrible oppression of widows and fatherless children.”—*“The Paupers’ Advocate; A Cry from the Brink of the Grave, against the New Poor-Law.”* By Samuel Roberts, March, 1841.

“My Lord, — The New Poor-Law, which owes its origin to your lordship, is working out a more important and benevolent result to the country than any political measure of the present century, in its amelioration of the condition of the labouring classes, by the improvement and elevation of their character. It is satisfactory to learn the reduction of such rates as show the amount of national distress; but it would be still more gratifying if we might obtain the returns of the idle and vicious, who have been reformed; and of the many homes which compulsory labour has made happy. The cultivation of the waste labour of the country is visible in the rapid advancement of agriculture; but the principal value of the bill consists in this, that it has brought back industry, with her train of virtuous dispositions and affections, to the dwellings of the poor, and called into healthful exercise the energies of the able-bodied labourer, who formerly lost days, and, collectively, years to himself and his family, under a system of dependence upon parochial relief; and frequently, conscious of this despicable penury, abandoned himself, and all that he should be as a man, to habits of drunkenness and despair.”—*“The New Poor-Law: Pour Et Contre;”* addressed to Lord John Russell by “Clericus.”—Feb., 1841.

“Those gentlemen who had come forward as the peculiar benefactors of the poor, and had represented to them that the New Poor-Law Bill was an oppressive and unjust law, were the worst enemies that the poor could possibly have. He (Lord J. Russell) could not sit quietly and hear statements made from day to day impugning the principle on which the alteration in the law was based, without maintaining, that notwithstanding what had been urged against the Poor-Law Bill, on the ground that it had contributed to the increased security of property, it had the merit of elevating the character

of the British labourer, of improving his condition, and of having restored him to that high position and state of independence which he held in former times. (Loud cheers.)” — Lord John Russell, *House of Commons*, March 19, 1841.

“The continuance of the Poor-Law Commission had been defended upon the ground that many of the proposed Unions had not yet been completed; but surely that object could be effected in a much shorter time than it was now proposed to give to the duration of the commission. But he objected to the measure on other grounds. It went to give the Commissioners a great deal too much power; it invested them with the power of making laws; it enabled them to appoint local boards of management, whom they found far more subservient and pliant than boards of guardians; it gave them the power of taxing to the amount of 20 per cent. a large sum annually levied upon the several counties. But the powers of the Commissioners were even yet more extensive; in illustration of this he should call the attention of the House to a paragraph which appeared in a newspaper, and respecting the statements which it contained, he had received private intimation which left no doubt on his mind that those statements were substantially correct. They displayed in a very striking manner the character of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and the principles which governed their conduct. The paragraph stated that a meeting had been held at Barnstaple, at which several magistrates and other gentlemen had attended, for the purpose of expressing their sentiments, as in this free country was their undoubted right, on the subject of the working of the New Poor-Law. The paragraph went on to state, that, immediately after the meeting, an Assistant-Commissioner was sent down, who summoned before him the gentlemen and magistrates who had attended the meeting, and proceeded to examine them on oath as to the remarks which they had made at that meeting. Now this he did know, at least this he had heard from authority on which he placed the fullest reliance, that a Commissioner did go down, that the name of that Commissioner was Gilbert, and that the name of the magistrate summoned before him was Wight.” — Mr. Townley Parker, *House of Commons*, March 19, 1841.

“It had been said that the old law offered a premium to prostitution in the orders which the magistrates were obliged



to give. But he never could believe that for an eighteenpenny order a woman would sacrifice her situation in life and admit her shame. In fact, such an argument ought to be treated with the scorn it deserved. But this he would say, that the New Poor-Law had not rendered an unfortunate woman liable to imprisonment on the birth of an illegitimate child, or allowed her to be hurried about from parish to parish when she was, perhaps, in the last state of pregnancy, as was formerly the case. He held in his hand a pamphlet, which was entitled *A Simple Remedy for Seduction*, edited by Sir Edmund Head, but he could not concur with much of the argument that was adduced by the writer. In that publication he stated one fact from which he (Mr. Parker) must certainly dissent, after the experience which he had had as a magistrate for 23 years. The writer stated that under the former law the fear of imprisonment necessarily influenced a person in the oath she gave; that the whole proceeding before the magistrates was *ex parte*; and that the reputed father was never present. Now, in his experience, he had never known an instance, nor did he think a single magistrate in that House could say he ever knew an affiliation order to be made without the reputed father's having been summoned to show cause against it: nor did he ever remember an instance in which that reputed father had established the fact of his not being liable to the charge. The pamphlet concluded with sundry quotations of Latin, French, and Greek, which might furnish considerable proof of the writer's ability, but the whole of his argument made him imagine that he had not had much experience on the subject."—*Ibid.*

"He had presented a petition to-night from the Guardians of a Union who stated that they got on remarkably well, so long as the Assistant-Commissioner kept away from them."—*Lord G. Somerset. Ibid.*

"There was, said the Commissioners, a great advantage on this subject in the interposition of an authority between Parliament and the people, who could issue regulations under the act in a detailed form; for the style of composition of Acts of Parliament was so peculiar as to render them hardly intelligible to other than professional persons, and the people at large would therefore derive advantage from this law being explained and administered by competent authorities. Now, certainly, if ever he saw a bill which would require

to be explained by some competent authority, so that any one could understand it, and especially if any of the 59 amendments that were proposed should be adopted, it was the bill now before the House. But he had heard it stated the other night in that House by a high authority, one of her Majesty's Ministers, the Secretary at War, that one of the most sacred rights which the people of this country laid claim to was, that the laws of the land should be so plain and simple as to be easily comprehended. He objected therefore most strongly to a bill of this nature, which required the elucidation of the Poor-Law Commissioners."—*Mr. T. Parker. Ibid.*

"The way in which the law was carried out was not justified by the law of the country. He should like to know whether gentlemen on the other side expected that the people would endure that the Commissioners should have the power of making laws; that they should assume kingly and legislative power; they were subject to no control; they were the law-givers. An order made by the Commissioners rescinded a direction in an Act of Parliament. The law was carried out in such a way as went, sooner or later, to destroy our social system, by creating a division between the rich and the poor. All power was centred in the Commissioners. The Board of Guardians could not discharge a master or mistress of a workhouse, nor a medical man, nor a clergyman, nor a schoolmaster. They must report to the Commissioners why they wished the individual to be discharged, and wait their orders. What did the Commissioners know about these matters? They actually put the Board of Guardians on their trial. In one case, where the returning officer had given 1s. 6d. to a poor woman, when he had been ordered to give 2s. 6d., being detected, he was dismissed, and the Commissioners called the Board to account for doing so."—*Mr. Grimsditch, House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*

"But at the same time he should watch the exercise of the powers vested in the Commissioners most narrowly; whether the period were one or five years. (Hear, hear.) He should consider the large powers intrusted to them; and, having devolved those powers, the greater they were, the more jealousy must Parliament exercise with respect to their application, and the greater the readiness with which they must listen to any allegations of

abuse. (Hear, hear.) While he consented to the prolonged duration of the commission for five years, he must say that he wished the Commissioners would watch the expressions they made use of with a little more circumspection. (Hear, hear.) He thought that with the best intentions there was occasionally a harshness displayed in the vindication of certain principles which might be avoided consistently with the maintenance of the law (hear, hear), and the avoidance of which would tend to fortify the powers of the Commissioners. (Hear, hear.) To give an illustration of this he would take, for instance, an official circular published by the Poor-Law Commissioners, one of those public documents directed by the Board to be printed chiefly for the use of the Guardians. In one of those papers he found the following expressions:—‘One principal object of a compulsory provision for the relief of destitution is the prevention of almsgiving.’ (Hear, hear.) Why he heard the noble lord (J. Russell) himself state, that the Poor-Law would completely fail in effect if the affluent withheld their alms. (Hear, hear.) That was perfectly true; and he should abominate the Poor-Law if he thought it relieved the rich from the duty of almsgiving. (Cheers.) He was perfectly certain the Poor-Law would fail if the affluent, relying upon its provisions alone, however improved the system of administration might be, felt the moral obligation on them to attend to the wants of their poorer neighbours was thereby extinguished. It was no such thing. (Hear, hear.) In point of fact, the relief of the poor must mainly depend on the rich and the affluent; and therefore it was unwise in the Commissioners to issue a public notice announcing that ‘a principal object of a compulsory provision for the relief of destitution was the prevention of almsgiving.’ (Hear, hear.) One object might be the prevention of mendicancy or vagrancy, certainly not of almsgiving. (Hear, hear.) Good God! it was a complete desecration of the precepts of the Divine law—‘Give alms to the poor,’ ‘Turn not your face from the poor man.’ (Hear, hear.) He only mentioned this as an illustration of the great advantage and wisdom of weighing the expressions which might be used, so as not to get up an impression of unnecessary hardship. (Hear, hear.) Indeed, he did think with respect to the public documents put forth by the Commissioners, independently of

the use of particular expressions, their general tone and character might be improved, consistently with the maintenance of the principles of the law.”—*Sir Robert Peel, House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*

“Mr. Slaney said he had supported the original Bill, and would not have done so if he had considered it in any way hostile to the poorer classes. His belief was, that this Bill was absolutely necessary to their welfare. He merely spoke as to the principle of it, and not as to every clause of it. In almost every county on the south and east coasts the labourers had formerly had their wages made up out of the poor-rates, and the services of labouring men were put up to auction. That was a system which had been maintained, not in one parish, but in several. If that were the case, was not the change which had taken place in the condition of the working classes of these counties to be considered as an improvement? He contended, that the labourers were much improved in condition by having their wages paid directly in money. The condition of the poor in the old workhouses was ill attended to. The able-bodied, dissolute woman, with two or three bastard children, was there mixed up with the old and infirm woman of correct life. Now these classes were separated, and old persons were placed in situations where they could enjoy those decent comforts fitted for their age, and where they were separated from those who formerly, under the old system, used to tease and plague them. The able-bodied had the option whether they would work or not, and if they would there was sufficient employment found for them. But, above all, what was the beneficial change which had taken place in the condition of the infant poor? They were now separated from the contamination of bad example, they had the best instruction, and were enabled to go out as servants and apprentices. He thought that these were reasons why they ought to finish the improvements they had begun. He thought the law would want some alteration; but, on the whole, there were such improvements in the Bill that it would be rash to return to the old system.”—*House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*

“But there is another point in the Leicester petition, and that is the selling of the goods of poor people before relief has been afforded to them. (Hear, hear.) The Chairman of the Committee, and



many who supported the Bill, have been anxious to have it made known that it was not the practice of those who executed this law to require the goods of the poor to be sold before they received relief from the parish. But here these petitioners are prepared to prove that such is the practice invariably pursued. (Hear.) And who can doubt the fact when we are told by the Commissioners in their third report, and in circulars, that the strict workhouse 'test' requires that every man before receiving relief should enter the workhouse, and his goods be sold for the benefit of the parish? (Cheers.) Would anybody for a moment question that when such instructions were given, that the fiends—for they are nothing better than fiends—who received those instructions, would follow them up to their very letter? (Cheers.)"—*Mr. Fielden's Speech at his Manchester Dinner, June 4, 1838.*

"What was this people, concerning whom one of the wealthiest of the land, who were really sensualized by the indulgencies that the labour and industry of those people had given them until they actually lost their reason and their intellect—had said, within a very short time, that to take notice of the wants and miseries of that people was impugning the Supreme Governor of the universe, and robbing him of his just attributes! (Execution.) Some of us, proceeded Mr. Condry, recollect the Bible as well as Earl Fitzwilliam. (Hear, hear.) We know there never was such a thing asserted by any author of the inspired writings. If we choose to turn the tables upon him, if we let loose the roaring ordinances of his threatenings, as exposed in the inspired book, upon the voluptuousness of an age when a single bottle of wine swallows up the weekly wages of five hand-loom weavers,—what will become of them in the day of popular wrath, which certainly will be kindled up if they go on in this abominable trickery? Hypocrites they must be; and it is the pleasure of a great many men to fancy themselves successful hypocrites. But here is a nation perishing, and a nobility and aristocracy luxuriating in the most monstrous indulgences, and then telling the people that they are bound to starve, for such is the will of the Supreme Governor of the universe! (Loud cheers.) How came the people to be in this starving condition—that is the next question. (Hear, hear.) What is it that has made Lord Fitzwilliam's estate worth what it is? Is there one of his

ancestors that ever added one farthing per acre to the value of that estate? (Hear, hear.) Is there one man of all the aristocracy, excepting Sir R. Peel, and he has fled into the arms of this worst of factions, who can say that he or his ancestors ever contributed one farthing's worth, either of thought or means, to aid or influence that intelligence and industry which has made this country more celebrated in all inventions, mechanical and agricultural, for the improvement of the soil, and the development of human power, than any country past or present? (Cheers, and cries of 'No.') In what a plight are we then! A whole people that have lifted this aristocracy up till their very hearts are fat, and their minds bereaved of intellect, are put out of the pale, and under what circumstances? (Hear, hear.) A century and a-half ago, or a little more, there was no debt, and scarcely any poor-rates. (Hear, hear.) The poor-rates were an invention to substitute the means by which the poor were fed before they were robbed of them by aristocratic pillage. The poor-rates are now denounced by men sweltering with wealth, who are actually eating and drinking themselves into disease from superabundance, who cannot get rid of it except by most inordinate waste, and who say that the people must not be relieved from any distress, by whatever cause it falls upon them. The late Mr. Cobbett has taught us to track the evil, and we will track it with a great deal more fidelity than we hitherto have, and find whither the oxen hunted into the den of Cacus, by-and-by, go. (Loud cheers.) We see nearly a thousand millions of debt, and eight millions of poor-rates, with land trebled, nay quadrupled, in value. The price of corn, as was suggested in an excellent letter from Bronterre, published in our friend Mr. O'Connor's paper, has risen in the same proportion, whilst the wages of the labourer remain almost in the same state as they were in the beginning. (Hear, hear.) But this is not all. Six millions of acres of common land belonging to the labouring classes were withdrawn from them in the reign of George the Third—(hear, hear)—and yet we have these men asserting, with all this accumulation of wealth, that they cannot rid themselves of, except by almost scattering it to the wind, that the poor-rate is going to devour the estates of the most wealthy and most powerful aristocracy that this world ever saw! (Immense

cheering.) Now as to the robbery of their estates, take you notice of their robbery of the six millions of acres of land belonging to the poor. (Cheers.) They have, by a pretended economy of the poor-rates—for it is only pretence—wrested three millions per annum from the poor; they have stolen six millions of acres in addition; and they have saddled the labour of the country with more than four hundred millions of permanent debt for the pleasure of beating down one race of Bourbons, and five hundred millions for restoring their successors. (Hear, hear.) No language can overtake this subject; and if we were to discourse upon it at the length it requires just now, it would be totally at variance with my respect for your president's most excellent observations. But now a word upon the question itself. Is there any man but one tied up to a system which seeks to devour the last remnant of wages, a man who dooms the labouring people to a 'coarser kind of food,' and who offers imprisonment instead of relief to labourers made destitute by the havoc of their own legislation—is there any man, I ask, who believes that a people so intelligent, so industrious, so inventive, as to alarm the jealousy of all the nations of the world—that such a people are seeking to destroy the property of others, to annihilate the reasonable rights of others, to pull down the monarchy, or to extirpate the privileges of the peerage such as they have a right to enjoy in reference to their natural extent of property? (Loud cheers.) The worthy canon of St. Paul's (the Rev. Sydney Smith) says he wonders how many of our institutions are under notice of destruction. These are his words:—

'I will, before I finish my letter, endeavour to procure a list; in the mean time I will give you the bill of fare with which the last Session opened, and I think that of 1838 will not be less copious. But at the opening of the Session of 1837, when I addressed my first letter to you, this was the state of our intended changes:—The law of copyright was to be recreated by Sergeant Talfourd; church-rates abolished by Lord John Russell, and imprisonment for debt by the Attorney-General; the Archbishop of Canterbury kindly undertook to destroy all the Cathedrals, and Mr. Grote was to arrange our voting by ballot; the Septennial Act was to be repealed by Mr. Williams, corn-laws abolished by Mr. Clay, and the House of Lords reformed by Mr. Ward; Mr. Hume remodelled county rates, Mr. Ewart put an end to primogeniture, and Mr. Tooke took away the exclusive privileges of Dublin, Oxford, and Cambridge; Thomas Duncombe was to put an end to the proxies of the Lords, and Sergeant Pryme to turn the universities topsy-turvy.'

Now I should like to ask him which of all the radical bodies that ever gathered together, have proposed any such system of destruction for the rights of others? —*Mr. George Condry's Speech, Ibid.*

"If there was any object to which he was willing to devote every energy both of body and mind, that feeling and that object was to raise the moral and physical condition of the humbler classes of his fellow-countrymen. He believed those sentiments animated the majority of the House; and that, though Hon. Members might differ as to the best mode of effecting that object, yet all desired to attain it, and he must take this occasion to say that he left the responsibility of such a contrary course upon the heads of those who, within and without the walls of the House, endeavoured to convince the people that the state and condition of the humbler classes was not at all times of deep and vital interest to members on both sides of this House. In common with the noble lord below him (Lord Howick), he was bound to express his admiration of the honesty of purpose which had induced the Hon. Member for Oldham to bring this question distinctly forward for the decision of the House. The Hon. Member had evidently no second purpose, and he (Mr. Clay) was delighted, that after all the violent language which had been used out of doors by individuals and by some portions of the public press, actuated no doubt by conscientious views, but who had laboured to influence the opinions of the people of England on the subjects of the New Poor-Laws—he was delighted that the question had been so calmly brought to the test of a decision of the newly-assembled Parliament, and that it might thus be ascertained what proportion of the representatives were to be prepared to say that the New Poor-Law should be repealed. (Hear, hear.) But to the motion which had been brought forward by the Hon. Member for Oldham he was most decidedly opposed. (Hear, hear.) No motion less worthy to be entertained by the House could possibly be propounded. He (Mr. Clay) had been an earnest and consistent supporter of the Poor-Law Bill in its passage through the House, and there was no one circumstance in his whole parliamentary career upon which he looked with more unmingled satisfaction. (Hear, hear.) He conceived there never had been a legislative measure grounded on clearer or more overwhelming evidence of the necessity of such a measure—on evi-



dence more carefully sifted, than had the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. It was with a view to the benefit of the humbler classes that he and the majority of the House had supported that measure. The supporters of the Bill had believed that there was no other remedy for that process of demoralization which had begun to an extent which threatened to bring the labouring classes into that abyss of moral and physical degradation from which it would in a few years longer have been impossible to redeem them. The anticipations under which that Bill had been passed he maintained had not been disappointed—nay, he would assert that those anticipations had been more than fulfilled; and it was to him matter of surprise that Hon. Gentlemen could, after the overwhelming evidence of the beneficial effects of the New Poor-Law, hold such language as had been adopted in the House to-night, and out of it, on other occasions. Had those Hon. Gentlemen read the evidence given before the Agricultural Committee two Sessions back?—was there any one point on which the evidence was more convincing than that which went to show the beneficial effects of the New Poor-Law? Agriculturists, merchants, farmers, indeed all who had been examined, had concurred in that opinion. That Committee had heard from all the witnesses that the result of the New Poor-Law had been the reduction of rates, the prevention of peculation, and jobbing, and the substitution for an irresponsible administration of a responsible direction, conducted by a body elected by the rate-payers themselves. It had been said both by the Hon. Member for Finsbury, and the Hon. Member for Oldham, that the old poor-laws were well administered. Now, what had been the object of the New Poor-Law Bill but to apply to all the parishes of England those very salutary regulations which had been found to be necessary even in those well-administered districts to which those Hon. Gentlemen had alluded? But the results of the New Poor-Law Bill were not confined merely to those which he had stated, but there had been also an improved condition in the labouring classes. (Hear, hear.) The strongest evidence had been afforded that good conduct, industry, and merit, had met their appropriate rewards—the clearest proof had been afforded that sound and wholesome relations between the employer and labourer, which previously had been so rare as almost to become matter of

history, were now, under the New Poor-Laws, rising up again. There was also reason to believe that the condition of the labouring classes had not only morally but physically improved, and that they had now a larger amount of money in the shape of wages than formerly came into their possession in the degrading shape of parish allowance. There was proof that friendly societies, which had been on the decline previous to the passing of the Bill, had, since the Bill had been brought into effect, increased both in the number of their contributors and the amount of the contributions; and this fact had been particularly shown to exist in the counties of Kent and of Sussex. Another test of the beneficial effects of the New Poor-Law was afforded by the saving-banks' deposits, which in 1837 had increased £900,000 upon previous years, and that increase consisted of the contributions of small contributors. (Hear, hear.) Again, it had been shown, that while the purchase of the necessaries of life had increased, the expenditure in beer-shops and other places of a similar character had decreased. With regard to the diet he could only say, that in one Union in the country with which he was acquainted, the increase of the allowance of wine to the old and infirm in the workhouses had been greater than it was under the old system. The Hon. Member for Durham (Mr. Liddell) had said he desired greater powers to be given to the Boards of Guardians, and that relief should not be confined to the workhouses. Now, he was not aware of any case of emergency having been refused; but whilst he believed that the test of the workhouse should be strictly attended to, yet he thought there were cases in which that test might properly be departed from, and he believed that in no case had that departure been negated by the Commissioners in London. However, a full and ample inquiry was now going on, and he thought the proposition of the Hon. Member for Oldham would rather operate against those very classes whose interests he was most anxious to protect and preserve. (Hear, hear.)—*Mr. Clay, House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

“It might be well if the noble lord's (Howick) notification to the people of England, who had that night been chastised for their excessive quietude, were not replied to in sterner terms than might be pleasing to certain individuals. The original proposal had, however, been mitigated. The proposal in the first in-

stance was, that no relief should be given outside the walls of the workhouse. Was that, he would ask, the general rule? Was it not rather the exception? The very excessive severity of the law had overshot the mark, and it was found utterly impossible to carry it rigidly into effect. If, indeed, the noble lord were to rise in his place and say that the principle of exclusive in-door relief would be abandoned, and a more generous principle substituted in its place, very much of what was obnoxious and repulsive in this Bill would be withdrawn. (Hear, hear.) Was it proper, he would ask, that an institution of this description should exist in this country, so unconstitutional in its combinations, so oppressive in its authority, so irresponsible in all its decrees as the dictatorial central Board by which the entire Poor-Law system was managed under the new Act? The opponents of this law would be greatly disarmed of their hostility if the Poor-Law Guardians throughout England were vested with the due discretionary power as to the administration of relief. (Hear, hear.) The great, the decided error in the machinery of this Bill, was the peculiar constitution of the Board of Commissioners sitting in Somerset-house, vested, as they were, with an original and absolute authority, and not sitting as a Board of appeal. Their authority was so extensive, that they had the power, not only of confirming, but originating, laws of the most stringent nature; and this was a circumstance, perhaps, of all others, the most repulsive to the feelings of all those who objected to the unconstitutional nature of this tribunal."—*Mr. D. W. Harvey, Ibid.*

"Mr. J. M. Cobbett commenced by observing, that he was afraid he should not, in the observations he was about to make, be able to carry out in words the 'destructive' desire the meeting had just exhibited in their acclamations; but he would assure them, that if words of his could destroy the New Poor-Law, and the factions which supported it, those words he would do his best to supply. (Hear.) They had, however, the consolation of reflecting that some of the parties instrumental in bringing forward, and in passing that Act, were, if not destroyed, effectually placed upon the shelf. In the first place, there was the bold Northumbrian. He was prime minister when the Bill was brought into the House of Lords; but he ceased to hold office the very day, or within a short time

after it passed; and he had not been heard of since. Then there was Lord Spencer, the father of the Act in the House of Commons. That noble lord very speedily after the Bill was passed into a law retired, as his noble friend Lord Morpeth expressed it in Latin, 'to fatten oxen, sheep, and pigs;' and it was to be hoped, that however well he might handle an ox, he might never again have anything to do with handling his countrymen. (Hear, hear.) Lord Spencer was gone, never to be found again, for he was as much set aside as any man, except Lord Brougham; and he was so completely and so fitly sprawling upon the shelf, that no man ever expected him to live again in political matters. (Hear.) There was one circumstance with regard to Lord Brougham which did not apply to either of the other parties; he vowed that it was contrary to all just principle, contrary to all good policy, and contrary to all sound morality, for any man not to lay by enough whilst he was at work to keep himself when out of work; he said this was so contrary to all just principle that he never could hear of it himself, yet he took care to retire upon a pension of £5,000 a-year! (Hear, hear.) Having so far disposed of that part of the Whig faction which supported the New Poor-Law, he would speak to the toast as it had been proposed. He had, on two or three occasions, expressed his strong opinion that this Act never could be carried into full operation, and that it ought to be totally repealed, because, to carry any portion of it into operation, if there should be even but a single clause worthy of being retained, would be keeping upon the statute-book an incumbrance and a disgrace to the country. But in discussing the merits of the law, we ought always to charge the parties who brought it in to fix it upon us, with having before their eyes experience—experience telling them that it had in it many of the principles of one passed a great many years ago, which was repealed with the universal consent of the nation. There was an Act brought into full force against the people in the first reign of the Brunswick family, George I., which directed that no poor man should receive relief unless he consented to go into what might be called a Union workhouse, for it was a large building erected for the use of a great number of parishes. What was the consequence? Why, that the wages of the labourer were immediately reduced, and



that a vast body of tradesmen, who lived as they all did, from receiving on the Saturday night the custom of the labouring men who worked six days in the week, were rooted out. That Act destroyed also all those institutions which grew out of the 43d of Elizabeth, and which had wound themselves in, as it were, with the constitution of the country. He had in his hand a small pamphlet which showed that there was at that time something strikingly apposite to the state in which we were at present. This pamphlet was written about fifty years after the Act 9th of George I. was put into operation, and the writer was principally speaking of Great Yarmouth to show its effect; he concluded in these words :—

‘Let it not be thrown in the teeth of the English of the present day, that, whilst a great part of our countrymen are overflowing with zeal to annihilate negro-slavery, and hesitate not to risk, for the purpose, a convulsion in our plantations, that at home they are absolutely eager and strenuous in degrading their fellow-countrymen to a worse than negro state, in dooming them to dependance on many masters, to ceaseless labour and confinement, to hopeless want, to the curses of society, which mutters whilst it maintains them, to a herd without attachment, and to a gaol without guilt.’

This was from a pamphlet which, from its dingy state, they might see was an old one, written by a gentleman very well versed on the subject, and after fifty years’ experience of a law which embraced the main principles of that which was now wished to be brought into operation. (Hear, hear.) Its promoters, then, had before their eyes experience to teach them that the Act, in those parts of the country where they had thrust it upon the people, had signally failed in producing any sort of good to the labouring men. With that experience they were chargeable with guilt, with criminality, in having attempted to impose upon us an Act whose operation must be similar to that of the 9th of George I.”—*The Manchester Fielden Dinner*, June 4, 1838.

“As far as regarded the evidence given before the last Poor-Law Committee, it was not entitled to the consideration of the House, and although he was not able to deny, not having acted upon it, that an improved spirit prevailed in the present Committee, yet when he called to mind that there had been already laid on the table of the House six successive reports from that Committee, and that those reports embraced the evi-

dence of but one man (Hear, hear, and a laugh), and that one man a Poor-Law Commissioner, he must ask what was likely to be the value of the evidence which would be laid before the House as the result of their entire labours. Why, who wanted to examine a Poor-Law Commissioner? (A laugh.) They had enough of them already. What the country wanted was, that an inquiry should be made among those persons who could alone tell what the real effect of the measure was. A Committee had sat to inquire into the condition of the handloom weavers, and volumes of its reports had been presented, which it would require the strength of a more than ordinary pauper to wield (a laugh), and now a Commission was going to make another inquiry. Why not adopt the same course here, and empower the Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of the handloom weavers to inquire into the working of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act? Or, if it was thought that this would be too largely extending their duties and labours, why not appoint a Commission on purpose? If the Commissioners visited the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, with the condition of which he (Mr. Harvey) was best acquainted, they would be witnesses of a harrowing scene of misery, which would afford a complete answer to the delineation of content and happiness produced by the measure with which the noble lord had indulged his imagination. The evidence of Mr. Poor-Law Commissioner Polson bore reference to the working of the system in the town of Nottingham. Now, the real evils of this Bill were not to be traced in large towns. The circumstance of 60,000 or 80,000 persons being brought together within a circumference of four or five miles presented many advantages, and here lay the fallacy. There was no real comparison between town and country, as far as the working of this measure was concerned. In the rural districts the inconveniences resulting from the existing system were most strongly felt by the poor. It was true that the poor object could apply for relief, but it was in the power of the Relieving Officer to deny relief, until he might choose to submit the case to the consideration of the Board of Guardians; or, if he pleased, he might dole out such relief as would barely serve to keep soul and body together during the interval. That he might refuse the relief, however, was an undoubted fact;

and the poor applicant might be forced to walk for a distance of several miles before he could obtain relief. He heard some gentlemen cry, 'Humbug!' (A laugh.) This was a sentiment on which, doubtless, many landlords and others, who derived substantial advantages from the existing law, might be disposed to rely. ('No.') He had most undoubtedly heard the expression, and trusted that he might for the future receive a more dispassionate consideration from the House. The attention which had been paid to the speech of his hon. friend the member for Oldham, and which had been exhibited, in fact, throughout the whole course of this debate, completely negatived the supposition that the House was indifferent upon the subject of this night's discussion. (Hear.)"—*Mr. D. W. Harvey, House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

"Lord John Russell and the members of the New Poor-Law coalition are no advocates of half-and-half measures. They propound their theory boldly, and endeavour to work it out consistently; and if any difficulties arise, either of a speculative or of a practical nature, which may prove stumblingblocks to more dim-sighted or less intrepid minds, they have a sovereign remedy at hand to allay them at once. It is, indeed, not the least instructive among the many lessons which may be learned from this political *experiment*, that no argument is too poor to defend a bad cause. Point to the dismal and unsightly erections, the *new landmarks* of our once happy isle, framed so as to shut out the fair face of nature from their inmates, and to consign them to virtual darkness, and we are told that the very object of these deformities is to inspire terror into the poor, and to operate as an effectual check upon idleness; and that the only cure for the evils of the old law is to make the present so severe that none but the most destitute will accept its dear-bought relief. On the other hand, exclaim against the cruelty, which, with an un pitying eye and unsparing hand, invades the cottages of the poor; not to administer relief or consolation, but to drag them from their homes and transplant them by an imperious decree, husband torn from wife, parent from child, and stripped of every earthly good that belonged to them, to the foreign soil of a Union—speak of this, and with the same lips men will piously disclaim the barbarous edict, and congratulate themselves, with a self-satisfied air, that they

at least have done all they could to render the lot of the poor far more comfortable than it was before. Again, the advocates of the New Poor-Law pretend, in general terms, that the workhouse is only intended for those who will *not* work; but, if hard pressed, they are obliged to qualify this general assertion, and to descant on the impossibility of providing adequately either relief or work for the poor, the necessity of reducing rates, and the like. But the last and most barefaced apology for the system remains to be stated. There is an old saying which expresses the facility with which evil men can veil the most sinister purposes under the garb of sanctity. Now, without desiring to lay so heavy a charge upon the supporters of the New Poor-Law, we cannot help remarking that there is something of the same spirit in the assumed charity with which, as a last resource, they seek to clothe it. Happily for the honour of humanity, there are some men, who, though supporters of the Bill in the main, are yet incapable of acting fully up to the principles which may be fairly deduced from it, and which its originators avow. But we very much doubt whether, of the two, they are not less dangerous enemies to the poor who tell us plainly that almsgiving will defeat one main object of the Bill, than those who dare to boast that the very severity of the Bill will be the greatest inducement to almsgiving, thus making the charity of individuals witness against the want of charity in the nation. Better is it that an evil should burn out by its very intensity, than be prolonged by unwholesome mitigation. Now, why all these contradictions? Why this dexterous shifting of arguments? What honest measure ever required the support of such Januslike advocates? Why, if charity be right in individuals—why, O ye political economists, tell us why it is wrong in a nation? These are not imaginary theories, but doctrines gravely maintained, and repeated by men who should know better, every day. However, Lord John, and his competitors in the work of extermination, like the French philosophers in the last century, are resolved that the illumination of the next generation shall atone for the necessary hardships of the present. If the reign of terror now held over the poor be severe, it is to be short, and is to be succeeded by an age of glory. Poverty is to be unknown, because ignorance is forbidden; and if we take care of the



minds of the rising generation, their bodies will take care of themselves. What is to become of the workhouses *then*, is a further question, for which we trust the wisdom of the Poor-Law Commissioners will find a satisfactory answer. Such is the new truth, now first promulgated, but not to be duly appreciated till the close of the nineteenth century."—*Times*, April 9, 1841.

"Yesterday, the Marylebone Board of Directors and Guardians of the Poor held their meeting in the Board-room of the workhouse, New-road, and

Mr. ANCELL having, at one o'clock, been appointed to the chair,

Mr. THORNE, the secretary, read the minutes of the preceding meeting, and the whole of the correspondence respecting the emigration of pauper females to Australia, the whole of which, it will be remembered, appeared in the columns of the *Times* of Saturday last, and on their confirmation being put,

Mr. KENSETT moved the non-confirmation of that portion of the minutes which had reference to the communication from the Poor-Law Commissioners, namely, the resolution moved by Mr. Bushill—'That the report of the committee, recommending that certain female paupers be sent to Australia, not having been adopted by the Board, the Directors and Guardians of the Poor of St. Marylebone do not think it necessary to furnish the Poor-Law Commissioners with a copy thereof.' He (Mr. Kensett) was one of those who were opposed to that Board having anything to do with the Poor-Law gentry of Somerset-house, much less to submit to any dictation from them in the shape of rules, orders, and regulations. They had been much disposed lately to interfere with and pry into the secrets of that Board without any right or pretension whatever to do so. That Board were returned by a large body of the rate-payers, nearly the whole of whom had loudly and publicly expressed a distaste for the tyrannical, domineering, and centralizing power of the Poor-Law Commissioners. (Hear.) The great majority of that Board, he believed, were imbued with similar feelings respecting those gentlemen, and therefore he hoped they would not commit themselves by any communications with them. Perhaps the Board were not cognizant of the fact that the Poor-Law Commissioners had declared to one of the members for the

borough, that they had the power, if they thought proper, to come and take their seats at that table, and that they had serious intentions of doing so. (Hear, hear.) Such was the fact, and therefore the Board must be very cautious how they gave such persons the slightest opportunity. The letters of the Commissioners were as much of a dictatorial and commanding tone as if that Board belonged to a Union absolutely under their control, and he therefore called upon them to put a stop to such a proceeding by boldly facing the Commissioners and denying their right to exercise one tittle of their centralizing power over that parish. He should, in the first place, move the non-confirmation of the minute in question, and he should then follow it up with another resolution.

The motion having been seconded and carried in the affirmative,

Mr. KENSETT said, he would now move 'That this Board decline to acknowledge the power of the Poor-Law Commissioners or their Secretary, to issue any orders to, or demand from, the Board any information as a matter of right. The Board has no objection, however, as an act of courtesy, to direct their secretary to inform the Poor-Law Commissioners that the report of a committee referring to the fitting out of ten females to South Australia has not been adopted by the Board.' This he considered was the best way of disposing of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and of testing their boasted powers. That was an independent Board, constituted under a local act, and they were bound, as an act of justice to the rate-payers, to resist any attempt whatever on the part of the Poor-Law Commissioners to infringe it in the slightest degree.

Mr. GIBSON seconded the resolution. He denied the right of the Poor-Law Commissioners, as they had recently done, to demand any explanations of that Board whatever. They had, on the subject of emigration of female paupers, and also in the case of Harriet Longley, assumed a most dictatorial tone. This was not all; he could corroborate what had been stated by the mover of the resolution. Sir Benjamin Hall had told him that the Poor-Law Commissioners had declared to him that they had the right, and they thought they should exercise it, of coming and taking their seats at that Board. (Laughter.) He would say, let them do it. If they did, the Board would be

obliged to do as they had done in the adjoining parish—order them to walk out, and if they did not go, to eject them by force. Lord Denman had distinctly decided that the Poor-Law Commissioners had no right to interfere at all with parishes under Hobhouse's Act; and until that Act was repealed, or they got a clause inserted in the new Bill to give them such power, he thought they would not dare to carry their threat into execution.

Mr. HAKES was glad that such a resolution had been proposed, and he should support it, as he considered it would be a sort of trial of the actual powers of the Poor-Law Commissioners. (Hear.) Many and various opinions and constructions had been put upon the existing Act of Parliament. Some were of opinion that they had the right, if they thought proper, over parishes under local acts, and others that they had not. It was, therefore, important that such a point should be settled. (Hear.) A resolution like that proposed would have a tendency to draw the Commissioners out, and if they were possessed of the slightest moral courage, and were convinced they held the right and power to interfere in the way that had been stated, they would not fail in openly asserting it.

Mr. LANGHAM, and other members of the Board, spoke a few words upon the question, and on the resolution being put it was carried *nem. con.*

The Board, after transacting some routine business, separated."—*Times*, April 10, 1841.

"The Commissioners justly thought that by refusing relief out of the House they stimulated the labourers to make provision in time of high wages for the frost and snow of February. At the same time, there was the workhouse, with wholesome food, for those who were in real and urgent distress. He would notice another statement of the hon. member for Finsbury, which, coming from a member of a committee to which they had both belonged, was startling to him. He had said, that when able-bodied paupers had applied for relief, they had been told to sell their cottages, get rid of their establishments, and come into the workhouse. Would the House believe that this statement was not only unwarranted by any fact, but had been proved by the examination conducted by the hon. member himself to be the opposite of fact?

(Hear, hear.) Questions had been put to Mr. Dawson, the Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, and he had stated that in no instance of application for relief had persons been required to sell their furniture and part with their cottages; that he had never known an instance in which it had been done. (Hear.) In one case a person was possessed of plate (silver spoons and other articles of plate); the Guardians had felt that they were not justified in allowing a person possessing that property to enter the workhouse. His argument was, that the relief now administered was exactly the same system of relief which did prevail previous to the Poor-Law Amendment-Act in the best administered parishes, St. Mary's, Nottingham, Derby, Cookham, and other places; he, therefore, could not understand the consistency of the hon. members if they objected to both the machinery and the system. With respect to the workhouse system, the hon. member for Oldham had again adverted to the complaint so often made as to the separation of man and wife. But it was remarkable that the hon. member, in the same speech, had cited with approbation the former system at Oldham. He (Lord Howick) referred to the evidence taken in 1833, with reference to the mode of administering relief at Oldham, a parish with which the hon. member was well acquainted, and he found it stated that 'there is a complete separation of sexes (hear), except in cases of old married people, who were allowed to live together; but young married persons were separated.' (Hear.) The hon. member had professed to have a great acquaintance with the system of administration in the country, and he had told the House that the object of his motion was to return to the old system of relief to the poor; if so, why propose the repeal of the Act of 1834? Why, previous to 1834, the very same system of separation prevailed in Oldham. Why, then, employ these inflaming topics with respect to this part of the law, when the same system existed in Oldham, and not only in Oldham, but in the majority of the workhouses in the manufacturing districts of Lancashire? He had said that the new law was not necessary in Lancashire, as the system there was so good. The hon. member for Oldham had talked of the workhouses being prisons. Were they more so now than they were before 1834? (Hear.) In what respect? He (Lord Howick) thought that the real hardship



of a prison was not being able to get out; but he had never heard that any man had been refused permission to leave a workhouse whenever he pleased. He was refused liberty to go in and out when he pleased, and to obtain relief out of the workhouse at the expense of industrious persons. He had never heard of any instance in which a workhouse could be assimilated to a prison by its inmates being refused permission to leave it. The hon. member had said, that in eighteen counties, or at all events in a very large number of counties, the expenditure had been reduced 42 per cent. In a large number of Unions in the south of England the expenditure for the maintenance of the poor had been reduced 42 per cent., but notwithstanding all this reduction the expenditure was still greater, according to the hon. gentleman's statement, than it was at Oldham. But what did that prove? It proved that in the south, in consequence of the old and improvident habits of expenditure which had long existed there, they had not been able to adopt so perfect a system as in the north—that they had not been able to apply a strict corrective to all the evils which had grown up under a long system of maladministration. Such was, in truth, the case, and the fact appeared to him to be one of the strongest arguments in favour of the system which the hon. gentleman wished to change.”—*Viscount Howick's Speech, House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

“The hon. member, in one of his last observations, had said that no petitions had been presented to the House signed by agricultural labourers, and in favour of a continuation of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. He had stated that all the petitions in favour of that Act came from Guardians and rate-payers, who had a direct interest in preserving it in operation. Now he (Lord Howick) could not say whether that was the case or not, but he believed that petitions so signed had been presented. It was not, however, and never had been, the custom of those who were suffering under no grievance, who had nothing to complain of, to take the trouble of petitioning that House.

“Mr. FIELDEN.—There have been petitions against the New Poor-Laws from the agricultural districts.

“Lord HOWICK.—The hon. member said there had been petitions against the present system of Poor-Laws—no doubt

of it. Those who complained naturally petitioned, but those who had no cause of complaint had no motive for petitioning the House. He was, therefore, prepared to expect that no petitions would be presented complaining of the New Poor-Law, and signed by agricultural labourers. But did the hon. member believe, or could he show, that there existed on the part of the agricultural labourers anything like discontent or dissatisfaction with the operation of the new system.

“Mr. FIELDEN.—The dissatisfaction is very great.

“Lord HOWICK.—The hon. member said the discontent was very great, but did the hon. member find no discontent existing during the year 1830 in the agricultural districts? The agricultural districts were then enjoying the full benefit of the system which the hon. member for Oldham wished to restore; they were enjoying all the blessings of the system of relief which was then in operation; and what, he would ask, was the state of the country at that period? Had the hon. member forgotten the alarming state of the country in 1830? Did the hon. member forget that the insurrection in the agricultural districts approached almost to the capital? Did he forget the outrages which extended from north to south—the nightly fires, and the state of alarm in which the farmers throughout the country were kept during the winter of that year? The state of things was now very different, and that difference he (Lord Howick) contended was mainly to be attributed to the New Poor-Law Act, which the hon. member for Oldham so much condemned. The present condition of the southern districts, where the outrages to which he had alluded had been greatest, was, in his opinion, to be attributed to the Act of 1834; and that the state of those districts was much improved no one would dispute.”—*House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

“The hon. member for Oldham commenced by complaining, that by the Act of 1834, the rights of the poor had been wrested from them, and that there was no occasion for the introduction of that law, for that the old Poor-Law was well administered; and the hon. member for Finsbury commenced by saying, ‘Where was the necessity for this law? You see what are the principles on which the Commissioners act, the whole of their system of relief might be carried into effect with-

out the act, as had been done at Chichester.' He made the goodness of the system of administration an objection to the law. Then, was it to the machinery of the new law they objected, or to the principle of administering relief? (Mr. Wakley said 'To both.') If to the machinery only, they were not at liberty to use this argument and say, 'Your machinery is objectionable because it contributes to introduce a system which is not itself objectionable.' But if they objected to the system of relief, he asked them what there was in the system which they objected to? The Act of 1834 introduced some new arrangements with respect to the poor, but he denied that the system of relief sanctioned by that Act was any departure from the good and ancient practice of the country as the law existed up to 1834. Were gentlemen who talked of the injustice of repealing the Act of Elizabeth aware that that Act remained in force? (Hear.) The Poor-Law Amendment-Act of 1834 was passed to enforce the proper application of the principle enacted in that statute. The machinery introduced by the Poor-Law of 1834 was not a different system of relief from that which has existed in every well-regulated parish (hear, hear), particularly in the north of England." — *Viscount Howick's Speech*, Feb. 20, 1838.

"As to the internal discipline of the workhouse, how many instances have we heard of cruelties which must shock and harrow up the feelings of every Christian and Englishman. Witness the atrocities which have been perpetrated at Hoo, at Eton, and in our own neighbourhood at Crediton; witness the still more recent disclosures close to our own door at Southmoulton; — cruelties and abominations which are appalling to every feeling of humanity. And, I am sorry to say, that in every one of these instances the Commissioners have endeavoured to stifle inquiry; and I am still more sorry to add, that in that endeavour the Commissioners have been assisted and supported by the Boards of Guardians: and who have the poor to look to for redress? They can but appeal to the people out of doors, and through them to the Government of the country. The Boards of Guardians, too, have manifested their opposition to investigation by attempting to intimidate any of their body who have had humanity and public spirit enough to bring these acts of cruelty before the public; I speak from newspaper report, but I have a right to

infer that it is true, because hitherto it has been uncontradicted. I will instance the case of Mr. Osborne, a most humane man, a Guardian of the Eton Union, who, finding that the Board was reluctant to deal with the cruelties which were too palpable to be denied, determined that the perpetrators should not escape with impunity, and brought them before the magistrates, and by the law of the country and the justice of the bench they were exposed and punished as they deserved; for, thank God, the law of the land is still the friend and protector of us all. But what was the course pursued by the Board of Guardians? Why, at their very next meeting, they passed a vote of censure upon Mr. Osborne for having brought the matter forward! At Penzance, in an adjoining county to us, a melancholy instance of the effects of this harsh treatment in the Union-house has lately happened: a poor wretched creature (a bad character she is said to have been, and probably was) applied for relief and was ordered into the House, and lodged in the refractory ward, and there she remained without a bed, or a fire, or accommodation of any kind whatever, until she was so harassed and hunted by this system of severity, that she gave over to despair and actually hanged herself in the place! The Commissioners were applied to to order an investigation, they sent down an Assistant-Commissioner, who made inquiries and sifted the truth on the spot; and although the facts were made out undeniably, yet I have been informed the Board of Guardians, after the scrutiny, censured the individuals who were the means of bringing the case to public notice." — *The Rev. H. Lushmoore's Speech at the Barnstaple Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, Feb. 27, 1841.

"Out of a total of 236,000 aged and infirm persons receiving out-door relief, no fewer than 87,000, or more than one-third, are partially able to work. This large number of paupers may be considered as receiving relief in aid of wages, and as injuring the independent labourers, by depressing the rate of wages. We entertain no doubt that, if Boards of Guardians would resolutely require, as the condition of giving relief to those persons, that they should come into the workhouse, or should be employed on account of the parish or Union, or should even, as in the case of persons receiving such allowances from friendly societies, abstain from all employment, a large proportion of this



87,000 would be found capable of supporting themselves, and would, by refusing relief upon these conditions, relieve the country from a large expense with which it is now fraudulently burdened."—*Commissioners' Report*, 1840.

"To express pity for, or to speak respectfully of, the poor in either House of Parliament, would now produce contempt or derision. By what means has this awful change in the feelings and conduct, as respects the poor, been effected? By the higher classes having now during many years generally lived beyond their incomes, and being determined, rather than lower their expenditure, to stick at no means of oppressing those who could not resist, which held out any promise of affording some addition, however trifling, to their unnecessary abundance."—"The Paupers' Advocate," by Samuel Roberts (of Sheffield,) 1841.

"Should a man dare to propose in Parliament that the Inquisition should be established in this kingdom, does my Lord John think that it would be right in the people of this country to submit to it, even should the Bill be passed? I think not! Now I will tell our Legislators that they have passed, and seem determined to establish, an Inquisition more senseless, more unjust, more inhuman, more wicked, and more destructive, than any one that ever was established in any country on the face of the earth. In all such hitherto, the *poor* and the unaccused have been rarely molested by them. The inquisitors have been men of high rank, they were men who believed in God, who conceived that they were serving him, and endeavouring to save the souls of the victims whom they were sending to the stake, while *one* inquisition *prison* served for a whole kingdom. But what is the inquisition established here? The three great Inquisitors-General *may* be the vilest, basest reptiles in existence, while they are endowed with greater despotic power than those in any other country ever possessed. Three men (base as they may be) have had a power bestowed upon them which the bestowers had not, therefore could not give—that of enacting and enforcing by their own decree, penal and destructive laws, with which Monarch, Lords, and Commons, had nothing to do. Nay, further than this, they are authorised to depute this power to others. In other countries, with one prison, a hundred prisoners were much more than the average number, while here we shall probably

soon have three hundred *Inquisition Prisons*, and perhaps three hundred thousand prisoners."—*Ibid*.

"Lord Radnor said that as in the case of the Bridgewater Union, the noble lord had promised to move for a committee on the subject, he should refrain from advertising to it. As to the Hungerford Union case, he thought that the Commissioners might as well give up the Bill altogether as concede that point. They were right in refusing to allow wages to be raised out of the rate. (Hear, hear.) He knew a case in which a labourer of good character, with a large family, applied to have one of his children taken into the workhouse. The Board of Guardians said they were not allowed to take one—he must come in with all his family. The next day the farmer with whom he worked said he would give him a little more wages rather than let him go into the workhouse. That was the way the Bill operated when enforced strictly; but if it were not enforced, it could not be expected to produce such good effects. The Guardians, in many cases, were farmers, who disliked high wages, and wished to keep labourers at low wages. He knew the case of a farmer saying to others, Why are you so desirous to keep this Bill?—what you save in rates, you'll lose in rent; but he also knew the case of a farmer saying, he would consider himself a gainer by having good servants, with whom he could live in comfort, and not those who did not care whether he employed them or not. He heard there were some Unions in Yorkshire going on without any difficulty. No counties had been more pauperised than Norfolk and Suffolk, and no farmers were more intelligent. In these counties every Board of Guardians had adopted the rules of their own accord. What was the effect? In the winter before the establishment of the Unions, there were in one parish 1,264 labourers out of employment; last year there were but eighty-one. (Hear, hear.) In another there were in the former winter 900 unemployed—in the last winter not more than 60. He knew another instance in which, when the Assistant-Commissioners came to the Union, all the labourers of one parish came to the Union and said they could not live on their wages, and asked for out-door relief. The Board of Guardians applied to the Commissioner to relax the rule, but he refused, and an order was made for the admission of 96 into the workhouse. The farmers saw that they

could not do without so many labourers, and immediately raised their wages. In this way, by keeping the rule tight, the desired object was attained. There was another reason for keeping the rule tight, which he would give in the words of Dr. Whateley, the Rector of Cookham. The noble lord read from Dr. Whateley's publication:—"He always refused a worthy man relief, because he would not make him a pauper." Some said relief should be given to men of good character; he thought not—it was better to give it to men of bad character; the man of good character would get wages, but the man of bad character should not be allowed to starve. Relief was given on account of destitution, and the man of bad character should not be let die. The proper test for relief was destitution, not character. (Hear, hear.) On every ground he approved of the rule, and hoped it would be stuck to. The principle of the first poor-law was to relieve those who could not get employment, and that was the principle of the present Bill. The noble lord stated the other night, that there was an increase of crime since the passing of the Act; nothing could be less conclusive than the returns the noble lord quoted. In one of the counties most pauperized, Bedford, there had been a decrease of crime not less than 20 per cent. In Cambridge there had been a decrease of 10 per cent., and in Norfolk and Suffolk, a decrease of 7 per cent. Where it was most carried into operation it produced the most good in its operation."—*House of Lords*, March 26, 1838.

"By what strange infatuation the framers of this abominable law were influenced, he was equally at a loss to tell: but how any person could discover anything good in the law was to him unspeakably strange. It is, as his friend had often expressed it, the Devil's own act. That such was its character few arguments would be necessary to prove, for the mark of the beast is stamped on every page, and the language of demons is incorporated in every sentence. (Hear, hear, hear.) He observed, that it was strange that many people of liberal politics should support this law. He could only thus account for it; they must have read it through the medium of the Devil's spectacles, which perverts the true order of things, and leads those who wear them to think good is evil and evil good. He had frequently been astonished when he had heard the various speeches that were

made in Parliament in support of this measure; but his surprise was exceeded beyond everything, when he heard of Baines declaring that it was well received by the people. He might as well have said in the House of Commons that the people of Yorkshire were living without food."—*Mr. Brooks's (of Huddersfield) Speech at Dewsbury Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, Dec. 11, 1837.

"Mr. T. Attwood seconded the motion. He complained that while the noble lord wished to govern by coercion, he showed no disposition to ameliorate the condition of the people. If the noble lord had proposed to repeal the New Poor-Law, or to redress any other of the grievances that weighed so heavily upon the poor, he would have given the noble lord some credit for really pitying the miseries of the people. There must be some secret and unexplained reason for the partiality that the noble lord exhibited towards that bad measure, the New Poor-Law, for it could not be denied that the law had been received by the mass of the people with great dislike. He did not know any good it had produced. He had told the administration of Earl Grey that the law would have the most fatal consequences. He had asked Lord Althorp if he was ambitious of the title of Lord Pinch-pauper, and certainly the paupers had been pinched with a vengeance. About £2,000,000 sterling had been saved from the poor-rates; but how had the people benefited by the reduction? The poor creatures had had the bread taken out of the mouths of their families. It would have been better for the agriculturists if the £2,000,000 had been allowed to remain in the pockets of the paupers, in order that bread might be consumed. When 1,200,000 men came forward and complained of the suffering they endured from their unredressed grievances, it was very extraordinary that the noble lord would do nothing. They cried out for bread, but the noble lord gave them a stone. They cried out for liberty, and the noble lord gave them a serpent. (Laughter.) In every shape and way the noble lord gave the people coercion. He would remind the noble lord of the fate of the last Whig administration. Earl Grey brought forward the Irish Coercion Bill, and immediately afterwards the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill. He (Mr. Attwood) told that Government that they were adopting Tory measures, and worse than Tory measures; that they were



seeking to make the condition of Ireland more wretched, and to drag England down to the Irish level."—*House of Commons*, July, 1839.

"It was found, whenever the people wanted anything from Government, there was always a *difficulty* in the *arrangements*; but, that, when there were taxes to be raised there was no ingenuity required in levying them; and that, if necessary, she could soon find a fellow like Power, with a long book in his pocket, and telling the people the exact number of the hairs on their heads, if so, that they were to be taxed. The aristocracy pleaded that the people were yet too ignorant to be put in possession of the franchise, but that the real meaning of this objection was, that they had too much knowledge. This objection was urged because they knew that the people were in possession of that knowledge, which they dreaded more than they admired. That if knowledge was to be taxed, we should have Mr. Spring Rice going about the country with a brain-gauge in his hand, measuring the different *crania* of mankind; and he was sure that when he came to gauge the brains of Melbourne and his administration he would be obliged to write down no 'taxes paid here.' (Laughter.) He exhibited the selfishness and inconsistency of Lord Brougham in passing the Poor-Law Amendment-Act to deprive the poor of their right, and employed his own argument against him, by asking if working men were to lay up in their youth a sufficiency for their maintenance when in age, why Lord Brougham had not adopted the same excellent plan, instead of taking out of the public purse five thousand a-year, in the capacity of retiring Chancellor."—*Feargus O'Connor, Dewsbury Meeting*, Dec. 11, 1837.

"HUDDERSFIELD POOR-LAW UNION. —On Monday week, the Poor-Law Commissioners (by their representative, Mr. Mott, the Assistant-Commissioner), conceded to the Guardians of this Union, that no relieving officers are to be appointed, but that the assistant-overseers are to be continued, and their districts, duties, and salaries assimilated as nearly as possible to the present system; that the guardians are to have the exclusive direction as to out-door allowance in all cases; and that they are to adopt such a diet-table for the workhouse as they may think fit, without the interference of the Commissioners. In fact, they have surrendered the whole of their powers to the

Guardians, and thus, in this union, a virtual repeal of the act has been accomplished by persevering opposition."—*Manchester and Salford Advertiser*, Sept. 8, 1838.

"Earl Stanhope said, that some of the observations made by gentlemen who had addressed the meeting, called for a few observations from him. With regard to the power said to be possessed by the different Boards of Guardians appointed under the Act, he could only say that, although they appeared to be 'dressed in a little brief authority,' yet they were in fact the mere tools of the triumvirate of Somerset-house, and while that triumvirate had the power of fining and imprisoning persons who dared to dispute their decrees, it was mere idle folly to talk of any control the Guardians of the Poor had over the parochial expenditure. He (Earl Stanhope) was expected to attend the election of a Board of Guardians in his own neighbourhood, but he refused either to be elected a Guardian or attend the meeting. (Hear, hear.) He washed his hands altogether of any proceeding held under so unhallowed and detestable an Act of Parliament. He would take no part in a measure acknowledging the despotic authority of the Somerset-house Commissioners. (Hear, hear.)"—*Crown and Anchor Meeting*, Feb. 9, 1838.

"No doubt it would be a 'saving of expense to the Guardians to take one or two of the poor man's family into the workhouse rather than to compel him to send in his entire family; but they were aware that many similar applications were made. If the admission was made in one case it should be in several, and the farmer would not strenuously strive to raise his wages when he could do so out of the poor-law. Therefore, he thought the Poor-Law Commissioners were wise in their refusal. He thought when it had been found how the principle had worked, that it would be considered better that poor men should struggle through their temporary difficulties rather than throw themselves on the parish for relief."—*Earl Melbourne*, March 28, 1838.

"The Board of Guardians of the Stepney Union have dismissed from his situation a man named Thomas Quarumby, master shoemaker, in the Limehouse workhouse, who was recently convicted in the penalty of 40s., by Mr. Ballantine, the Thames Police Magistrate, for brutally assaulting a boy named James Watts, with a leather strap. The dismissal, un-

like some others in this Union, has been carried into effect, and advertisements issued declaring the situation vacant and calling upon applicants to send in their testimonials. The salary is 10s. per week and board and lodging. It is somewhat extraordinary that the Poor-Law Commissioners published a circular about four years ago, stating that they had dismissed James Sargeant, one of the Relieving Officers, for misconduct and neglect of duty, and a statement to that effect, signed 'E. Chadwick,' was inserted in nearly all the London journals, and the Ministerial papers commended the Poor-Law Commissioners for performing this act of justice. The fact is, that James Sargeant, the Relieving Officer, was never dismissed at all; he did not leave his situation for one day, and has been ever since acting as the Relieving Officer of the Shadwell and Wapping district in the Stepney Union.—*Times*, March 22, 1841.

"By Mr. Miles.—Q. 'Do you think that a pauper who is in destitution, and who enters the workhouse, has any right whatever to choose his own labour?' A. 'Certainly not.' Q. 'But, of course, the great thing would be to render as disagreeable as possible the labour given in that workhouse?' A. 'That should be the object, certainly, otherwise the workhouses would be full.'"—*Mr. W. H. T. Hawley, Assistant-Commissioner's Examination before the Poor-Law Committee*, March, 1837.

"Lord John Russell is carrying the amended Bill with a high hand through the Commons; we know that the noble lord honestly believes that he is pursuing that course which conduces to the common weal, though it be not a popular one. As honestly do we respect his lordship for this conscientious conduct; but laws which are universally repugnant to the feelings and judgment of a very large proportion of subjects, not only create discontent, but their execution, so far from carrying with it a moral effect, operates contrarily,—in fact, demoralizes the public mind. This fact, certainly familiar to the noble lord, is evidently, on the present occasion, not appreciable by him; hence we find him maintaining a position, with a determination more worthy of a hero, than befitting a lawgiver."—*Hereford Times, (Whig)* March 27, 1841.

"The examination of the Irish Poor-Law officials (during the past week in the House of Lords) has placed beyond the

possibility of a doubt, that these functionaries had recourse to downright, palpable falsehoods in order to secure the appointment of Returning Officer to the Clonmel Board of Guardians, for a notorious partisan, and, subsequently to the *falsification* of public documents, in order to conceal that fact from the House of Lords. These grave and serious charges have been fully established against them."—*Conservative Journal*, March 27, 1841.

"Mr. Wakley presented a petition from Wigley, against the Bill, stating that the Poor-Law Commissioners had exercised their powers with such oppression as almost to excite rebellion; and that they had treated with insult Guardians who had endeavoured to administer the law more kindly."—*House of Commons*, March 26, 1841.

"Sir Robert Peel said, that it could not be denied that the existing law, particularly that portion relating to the influence which the Commissioners exercised over those parishes which had local acts, had given rise to great dissatisfaction. The Court of Queen's Bench had decided, that in parishes governed by local acts the Poor-Law Commissioners should not interfere. But by uniting the parishes, by including them with others in the form of a Union, the Poor-Law Commissioners had it in their power to set aside the judgment of the Queen's Bench, and the authority of all local acts and local Boards of Guardians. In that way all the parishes now governed by local acts were placed under the arbitrary control of the New Poor-Law Commissioners."—*Ibid.*, March 26, 1841.

"He believed that the feeling against the New Poor-Law was mainly attributable to the orders of the Commissioners, (and still more to the manner in which those orders were delivered) to their harsh expressions, and most disagreeable opinions with regard to the lower classes of the community. The higher classes were better treated; but even the higher classes in the Board of Guardians, were sometimes treated with little consideration by the Commissioners, who seemed to think that they were in the position of being right in all their *dicta*; that any person who presumed to think that their *dicta* were not infallibly right was unfit to be a member of a Board of Guardians, or to manage his own concerns. But, independently of this, in their reports laid on the table of the House the same spirit prevailed; the same arrogance—he was aware that this



was; perhaps, an offensive word, but it was the only word he could find—the same arrogance prevailed in every one of their reports to the Secretary of State. A right hon. friend of his (Sir R. Peel) the other night had referred to an extraordinary paragraph in one of these documents—a paragraph of a most offensive and improper kind; but, strange to say, in the copy of the report sent to the members of the House that offensive paragraph did not appear. He believed that, in consequence of what had been said by his right hon. friend, they had been prudent enough to withdraw it; but the paragraph, he believed, appeared in the copies sold to the public in the usual way.”—*Lord G. Somerset, Ibid., Ibid.*

“For the original appointment of the Poor-Law Commissioners the Government must be responsible; and it had been its anxious care to select gentlemen most competent to give effect to the new law, and no other object had influenced the Government. With regard to one of them, the original appointment was well known to be that of a gentleman whose political opinions were adverse to their own. With regard to another, the gentleman had been Under-Secretary of State under a noble lord opposite, when Colonial Secretary, and the third was a gentleman whose general political opinions, he believed, were unknown to any member of the Government. The selection, therefore, was of gentlemen whose talents, experience, and knowledge, it was thought, would enable them to perform their duties efficiently, so as to give satisfaction to the public; he must say that he had seen nothing in their conduct to make him repent that he had concurred in their appointment; on the contrary, he thought that the Commissioners had laid down sound principles with regard to the law, and had carried the law into effect, on the whole, very judiciously. With respect to their circulars and instructions, he thought that sometimes there was something in their own style which, in regard to theory, did not so properly belong to an organ of administration.”—*Lord John Russell, Ibid., Ibid.*

“It was impossible for any man, in their (the Commissioners’) opinion, to call in question the Poor-Law Amendment-Act; it was impossible for any man to make a charge against an officer of the Poor-Law Commission without being at once run down. This was not fair; it was surely open to men who saw

and lamented in many instances the effects of the pressure with which the Poor-Law did operate on certain classes to state their opinions and feelings without being held up as men actuated by factious motives. This was exactly an instance of the feeling which ran through the whole of their proceedings; they could not conceive that they were wrong. Any person who questioned the administration of the law was looked upon as questioning the law. An important part of their functions was to check needless expenditure; but it was not their only purpose. They (the Commissioners) said, ‘Our principal duty is to prevent any relaxation to the poor.’ But if these gentlemen had understood better the principle of the enactment they had to carry into effect, they would not have appeared in one character only, as checking expenditure, but also as checking niggardliness on the other hand. But where did they find the Commissioners complaining that the dietary was too poor? It was always ‘It is too good.’ On every side they always appeared in the single capacity of restricting expenditure; but he saw no case where they had checked a body of Guardians for carrying any part of the New Poor-Law too strictly into effect. They should have relaxed where needed, as well as restricted where needed. They should have appeared as mediators and protectors.”—*Lord Sandon, Ibid., Ibid.*

“It appeared to him, from some instances with which he had become acquainted, that the Commissioners had interfered in a manner more harassing to the Boards of Guardians than there was any necessity for.”—*Mr. Gally Knight, Ibid.*

“He expressed his belief that in the exercise of the powers with which they had been intrusted, however they might have erred on some points, they had, in the main, succeeded in upholding the independence, and improving the condition of the poor, while they had greatly benefited the public at large. He contended that the position of the aged and infirm particularly had been greatly bettered by the New Poor-Law in comparison to what it was under the old law.”—*Mr. Slaney, Ibid.*

“All he had heard against the Board of Guardians convinced him that it was not consistent with the interests of humanity to abolish the commission.”—*Sir Robert Peel, Ibid.*

"He would propose a clause by which the number of Assistant-Commissioners should be limited to twelve for England and Wales; but, as Dr. Kay had acted as an Assistant-Commissioner without having any particular district assigned to him, he should propose to add him to that number, so that there would be thirteen in all."—*Lord John Russell, House of Commons*, March 24, 1841.

"The fiat went forth from Somerset-house, not six weeks ago, that 1s. a-head per week was enough for a sick family; and Edwin Chadwick wrote that 'the Guardians would not have done *wisely* had they given more.' Oh! that the law of Venice were that of England, and the lives of these official Shylocks were forfeitable for shedding one drop of Christian blood as they meted out their pound of flesh."—*Fraser's Magazine*, April, 1841.

"The Commissioners themselves said in their last report:—'The depressed condition of the manufacturing population, to which we have already adverted, and the disquietude of the public mind occasioned by the Chartist riot at Newport, in Monmouthshire, rendered us extremely unwilling to take any step in the manufacturing districts of Lancashire which might have even a remote tendency to produce a disturbance, which might be used by designing persons as a pretext for agitation.' At the period when the principle of administering relief to the poor could be best tested and shown to be good—at that period the Commissioners confessed their unwillingness to carry the law into execution! Who but the Commissioners could anticipate disturbance from directing that proper relief should be extended to the poor in trying circumstances, and carrying into execution what the noble lord (Russell) tells us is a humane and benevolent law! That showed not only the absurdity of a central Board to lay down rules of relief, but their impotency to carry out any rule on the subject, and of the wickedness of the attempt because of the suffering it inflicted, and of the sympathy excited by that suffering amongst the humane portion of the people of England."—*Mr. Fielden, House of Commons*, March 29, 1841.

"It was admitted by almost all parties in the House to be unconstitutional, and the exercise of those (the Commissioners') extraordinary powers was limited to a period of five years. There was, indeed, one gentleman in the House, *Mr. Frank-*

*land Lewis*, who said that the powers given by the Bill were *not* unconstitutional, and he was made a Commissioner. He was not so then, but, as if the office were hereditary, his son had succeeded him."—*Ibid.*

"It has been decided that the Commission shall not last beyond five years, and that the Assistant-Commissioners shall be reduced to twelve. Colonel Sibthorp has given notice of a motion for reducing the salary of the Commissioners and Assistant-Commissioners, who at present receive £2,000 and £700 respectively, to £1,000 and £300. This being a strictly economical proposition was however received 'with laughter,' and the Commissioners will of course, even at the hands of the *retrenching* Whigs, when the public expenditure so far exceeds the income, be voted their present large allowances. Such is the reformed House of Commons!"—*Port of Tyne Pilot*, March 26, 1841.

"The New Poor-Law was not the law of England; and if the England of to-day were the England of 200 years ago, every man who had had a helping hand in carrying that law through Parliament would have lost his head for the treason he had committed. (Loud cheers.) Talk of taking up him, and O'Connor, and Oastler! he wished they would take him up. He said that the present Prime Minister of England, Lord Melbourne, and the present Home Secretary of England, Lord John Russell, and the three Commissioners, Nicholls, Lewis, and Lefevre, all deserved impeachment; and if they were impeached before a constitutional tribunal, and the sentence were righteous, and according to the laws of England, the words of the jury when they gave in their verdict would be, that these men were guilty of treason against the Constitution and people of England; and the sentence would be, unless they choose to mitigate it by confining them upon the separation principle, clothing them in the Bastille dress, and poisoning them with skilly,—the sentence would be, that they should be hung by the neck till they were *dead, dead, dead.* (Tremendous cheers.) These were not hasty words. They were well timed; and they would find their way, as sundry others of his speeches had done, to the desk of the Queen's Attorney-General. Be that as it might, he had no hesitation in saying that all the men who advised the Crown to pass that measure deserved impeachment."—*Rev. J. R.*



*Stephens's Speech, in the "Northern Star," August 4, 1838.*

"It is difficult for the Guardians to ensure the conveyance of relief to a non-resident pauper, and to compel their own Relieving Officer to account regularly for it. The relief is usually conveyed in money; and there is much difficulty in the conveyance of small weekly sums to a poor person at a distance. This difficulty is sometimes sought to be overcome by the appointment of a receiver for the pauper, who furnishes him with the money weekly, and receives it in larger sums from the Relieving Officer of the Union to which the pauper belongs; sometimes by an arrangement with a Relieving Officer of the Union in which the pauper resides. Both these expedients, however, are imperfect, and lead to irregularities and other inconveniences. The receiver, performing a voluntary function, may omit to make the payments, or may deduct a percentage for his trouble; and the Relieving Officer of the Union in which the pauper resides, cannot be required to pay him his allowance on behalf of the distant Union. It is purely optional with the Guardians whether they will afford any facilities for the transmission of non-resident relief; and even if they were to instruct their Relieving Officer to pay a non-resident pauper on behalf of another Union, it may be doubted whether they could compel his obedience, inasmuch as neither Union employs or pays him for this service; the one, because he is not their officer; the other, because the service is not performed for them. The irregularity of the payments made to non-resident paupers, and the difficulty of checking the accounts of the Relieving Officers in this respect, affords a strong temptation to Relieving Officers first to use, and afterwards to embezzle, the money advanced to them by the Guardians for non-residents. The facility of withholding these payments is a most dangerous temptation to the Relieving Officers, and to a needy or improvident man, almost irresistible. A Relieving Officer knows that if he appropriates to his own use some of the money advanced to him for the non-resident paupers, detection will, at all events, be slow, and perhaps may never arrive. Moreover the proof of the offence is often difficult, and a plausible excuse for irregularity can always be alleged. Accordingly, the Commissioners find that the money advanced to the Relieving Officers, for non-resident relief,

is far more frequently misapplied by them than the money advanced to them for other purposes; and that the frauds arising from this cause are a frequent source of loss to the Guardians and rate-payers. The Commissioners have dismissed a considerable number of Relieving Officers for embezzlement of the money intended for the relief of non-residents. During the last year, in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, no fewer than five Relieving Officers have been dismissed, or have been compelled to resign for negligence or fraud in paying money entrusted to them for non-residents; and in another case, the peculation of a Relieving Officer was detected after his death. Three other cases of defalcation, arising from the same source, occurred in three adjoining Unions in Cheshire, within about six months. Other officers than Relieving Officers may also be implicated in these frauds. Thus a Collector of a Union in Dorsetshire, who had been appointed a receiver of non-resident relief by some other Unions, advanced money to the non-resident paupers in his Union from the rates collected by him: he thus acquired the habit of diverting the money in his hands from its proper object; and he has recently been dismissed as a defaulter." — "*Minute of the Commissioners "Respecting Relief of Persons not Resident in Unions," ordered by Mr. Fox Maule, House of Commons, Feb. 12, 1841.*"

Nine Assistant-Commissioners were at first appointed to personally superintend, throughout the country, the carrying into effect the commands issued by their superiors at Somerset-house. The duration of the Commission was limited to five years; an ample space to set the necessary machinery in motion, and teach the gentlemen, yeomen, and tradesmen of England, how to work it. The existence of the Commission has been twice extended; and Lord John Russell now seeks to make it eternal, at any rate coeval, with the duration of the laws of England. Whether this dreadful doom awaits the poor, is known only to the poor man's God; but this we do know, and will openly aver, that Lord John Russell, by his legislative deeds, has secured to himself an immortality of infamy: he will live in history's curse, when, as we devoutly trust, the Poor-Law Commission and all its attributes of horror are numbered with the things that once were, but are no more. We have said that the

Assistant-Commissioners at first were limited to nine, 'unless the Lord High Treasurer or the Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury for the time being, or any three or more of them, shall consent to the appointment of a greater number.' How easily this required consent may be obtained, is shown by the fact, that the nine Assistants] have increased to twenty-eight. Now we speak advisedly, with deliberation, and from extensive experience, when we affirm, that were her Majesty's dominions to be ransacked from end to end, more galling causes of offence to her subjects could not be found than may be traced to the perambulations of those itinerant functionaries. It is well for some of these gentry that the writer of these pages is forbearing, or such a history of the appointment of some of them, and its inducing causes, could be written, as should make many an ear to tingle—from those of the Secretary that sitteth at the Board, to those of the gluttonous vagabond who, with a single boon companion, swallows eleven bottles of champagne at a luncheon, and lives in open adultery with a harlot, while his deserted wife is obliged to apply to a police-office to compel a maintenance for herself and her children. As an instance of their demeanour to Boards of Guardians, we will record for the information of his superiors at Somerset-house, though we suspect the conduct we are obliged to mention will meet with their entire approbation, the behaviour of a very pet Assistant-Commissioner, a great industrial education-monger, to a Board that presumed to thwart his fantastic views. The official in question wished at once to lessen the allowance to the poor on the plea of reducing the rates, and to build expensive schools in the Union to educate pauper children after some new-fangled Gower-street fashion. The Guardians very properly resisted both applications; when the Assistant-Commissioner, maddened by their firmness, retired into an adjoining room, swallowed a huge opium pill; for though he grudges the poor labourer his beer, and himself affects to disdain a cup of generous wine, the nasty *fee-losopher* is devoted to the Chinaman's vice; and, 'Now,' said he, with delicious determination, '*d—d em, I'll break their necks!*' The sturdy yeomen whom he went thus primed to encounter were, however, made of sterner stuff than the opium-eater dreamed of: they persisted in their per-

tinacity, as he styled their resolution, not to starve the bodies of fathers to cram the minds of their children with nonsense; and shortly after the mortified functionary was removed to a more intellectual, and therefore in all probability more gullible, neighbourhood nearer head-quarters. Were we so minded, we could fill not merely the whole of this magazine, but an octavo volume, with the sayings and doings of these locust stipendiaries—deeds and words calculated at once to insult the respectable, and harrow the heart of the oppressed." — *Frazer's Magazine*, April, 1841.

"So far as cleanliness is concerned, nothing can be nicer than the rich man's dog-kennel; the copper in which the food of his hounds is boiled is scrupulously clean; the oatmeal of which their porridge is composed is of the purest quality; and no wind of Heaven is permitted rudely to break in upon Ponto's or Nimrod's repose. We only wish the poor were half as well fed and tended as many a coursing friend's greyhounds! But does it never occur to gentlemen and ladies, when they are visiting a Union-House, and surveying all its neat arrangements under the escort of a sleek and smirking matron, that their poor brothers and sisters, the inmates of these walls, who are heirs of the same immortality with themselves, capable of the same warm affections, and subject to the same passions, desire something beyond food to be devoured in silence, and a bed to be pressed in solitude? Prison disciplinarians consider enforcing silence the severest punishment that can be inflicted, and the surest subduer of stubborn natures; and yet it is now imposed upon those who have been convicted of no crime but poverty, for in most Union-Houses the paupers are forbidden to speak at meal-times."—*Ibid.*

It is recorded, by those who have made it their business to chronicle such matters, that the Duke of Wellington, on his return to England from conquering the imperial Corsican, directed that the charger which had carried him so gallantly through the dreadful dangers of that eventful fight, the battle of Waterloo, should for the rest of its days be turned loose, and left to roam unmolested over the pleasant meads of Strathfieldsaye. Humanity becomes a conqueror: and this trait of it sparkles, gemlike, in the character of the noble duke, and may



hereafter be continued to be told as a "memorial" of him. But were there not thousands of brave *men*, as well as this brave *horse*, who likewise carried him gallantly through the "dance of death" of that field in question? and were all of these on their return to their native land equally taken care of by his orders, and provided for in their old age and after years? Alas! alas! *Ingrata patria!* Since the passing of the New Poor-Law many a one of them—many a lowly *unpensioned* hero of Waterloo—has been refused assistance by the ruthless officials of the Union workhouse, and afterwards has perished in the very streets!

The good man is merciful even to his beast; but the good man is much more so to his brother—his poorer brother. The merely being merciful to a brute does not necessarily imply that a man is a benevolent Christian. One of the worst of the Roman Emperors was merciful to his beast—his horse, and carried his "mercy" to such an extent, as to deem him worthy of a consulship, and did stable him in silver, in gold, in ivory, and in precious stones. The crooked tyrant, Richard the Third, who, though he relished his murders as if they were mulberries, yet doted, almost to distraction, on his favourite steed, "White Surrey;" and the "mad Marquis," Waterford, who cares very little (so 'tis said) how many old apple-women and foot-passengers he drives over, and maims, or kills, when, out on a "lark," he propels his "trap" with frightful velocity over the pavements, is remarkably regardless of his "bit of blood," and on one occasion wished to have him subpoenaed as a witness upon oath. Again, the Duke of York, (afterwards James II.) who, as Jeffries' "bloody assize" can attest, was not very particular about the lives and liberties of his lieges, always exhibited especial solicitude when the welfare of his beloved quadrupeds was concerned; and when the vessel he was sailing in capsized in a storm, and was gradually going to the bottom, he loudly commanded the despairing and drowning mariners to "*Save the dogs*, and Col. Churchill, and spare not!"

But to return to the Duke of Wellington. The biographers, who have related the before-mentioned anecdote of the hero and his horse, loudly proclaim it to be *such* an example of the Duke's humanity and goodness of heart. It is very well for *them* to announce as much, but I, who have enlisted myself as a soldier to fight for God's poor, see *blood* upon the hero's

face—not the blood of battles—not the blood of the French,—but the blood of the Bastiles—the blood of the friendless, which has been spilt like water within those dens of murder and manslaughter—the blood of those who have died and sunk victims to the "test" in the public streets! Yes! on the Duke of Wellington's cheeks I see large goutts of blood—red, red! And what has placed those stains of horror there? His constant approval and advocacy of that cursed crusade—that unholy war against the old, the helpless, the bedridden, the broken-hearted, the idiot, and the children of much sorrow and great misery—the Somerset-house edict, which slays utterly!

It is not on the temples of the hero of many victories that those crimson spots only appear, but on the temples of all, of whatsoever rank, of whatsoever party, who have joined by word or deed to exterminate those whom nothing (much less a fiendlike philosophy) can ever exterminate. "The poor shall never cease out of the land." Oh! that the great Duke should have mixed himself up with such God-defying traitors! I tremble for the friends and favourers of the New Poor-Law—I tremble for them hereafter, when they have left this vain, fleeting sphere! E'en now, methinks, that awful voice, never heard by mortal being, rings in my ears as it addresses them each individually—"Cain, where is thy brother?"—*G. R. Wythen Baxter*, March 30, 1841.

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"Mr. Grote said, a great deal had been said by gentlemen in that House respecting the arbitrary and despotic power of these Commissioners; that was insisted on as a reason why the House should confine their power to so short a time as one year. He must deny that the Commission did at all deserve the appellation of 'despotic' or 'arbitrary.' The powers of the Commissioners were large, because their duties were serious and comprehensive. But the question for the House to decide upon was, were those powers more than sufficient for the duties which they imposed on the Commissioners to discharge? When gentlemen talked about 'arbitrary' powers, he understood by that word something that was subject to no legal or other limit. He asked gentlemen to say if the power of the Commissioners was so unlimited? Why every part of the power of the Commissioners was deprived from the act of 1832, and one or two less important acts since

passed. Their power under every one of these acts was subject to revision by the Court of Queen's Bench by the processes known to the law. Not only that was the case, but every decision of the Poor-Law Commissioners was liable to be disallowed by the Queen in Council. Not only did these legal securities exist, but let them look at the moral restraints under which the Commissioners exercised these powers. All their acts were necessarily public; open to the most rigid criticism—open to a criticism, which, to say the least of it, was severe and searching, not to say acrimonious. Then every one of the powers of the Commissioners was of a severe and restrictive character; every one of their powers was liable to bring them into collision with persons of activity and station, and to create them enmity in all quarters. And, moreover, in the event of misconduct on their part, there was no authority in the state which could hope to find so little favour. If gentlemen considered these things, and would only confine their attention to the real nature of the case, and to the legal and moral restraints under which the powers of the Commissioners existed, he thought they would see that they were not deserving of the appellation of 'arbitrary and despotic.' If the powers of the Commissioners were arbitrary, he should like to know what gentlemen would say of the powers of the justices of the peace (hear) to construe upwards of a hundred different Acts of Parliament, and to the construction they put on them being looked on in the most indulgent manner in the courts of law. (Hear.) But the House would recollect, that if they destroyed the Commission they must give either to justices of the peace, or to Guardians, or to the Secretary of State, the power of making these subordinate regulations which are now vested in the Poor-Law Commissioners. That power was requisite for carrying out the law. Under the old Poor-Law the same power was exercised by a vast variety of inconsistent authorities, without the public having any power to check their abuses. He would put it to the House whether there was not a vast security in the Commission for the avoidance of everything that was mischievous, and for the enforcement of the real and true intent of this important law. He did say that the House would not be doing justice to its own intentions with respect to the power of the Commissioners, if it did not continue the Commission, and the law under

circumstances favourable to their action, and if it consented to diminish the duration of the Commission to any period less than five years. If the House acquiesced in any shorter term, the effect of it would be to paralyze the authority of the Commission for good purposes much more than for evil purposes. The effect would be to create in the public mind an impression that these Commissioners had not the confidence of Parliament; and any portion of those subordinate authorities who were now placed under their direction had only to run the duration of their own life against that of the Commission in order to contend successfully against its authority.—Mr. H. HINDE confessed that he never was more surprised in his life than he was at what had just fallen from the Hon. Member opposite; and, knowing the Hon. Member's powers of arguing, the only conclusion he could come to was, either that the Hon. Member had not read the Poor-Law Bill, or that he had no knowledge of the practical working of it. The Hon. Member denied that the powers of these Commissioners were 'arbitrary and despotic.' On what ground was it that he founded that denial? He said that their acts were subject to the control of the Court of Queen's Bench. He (Mr. Hinde) should like much that the Hon. Member would quote to the House any case in which it was possible to make these Commissioners subject to that authority. (Hear, hear.) The Hon. Member also said that none of their orders became operative unless they were allowed by the Queen in Council. A very superficial knowledge of the proceedings of the Poor-Law Commissioners would convince the House that the ingenuity of the Commissioners had very much exceeded that of the Hon. Member. They had found out a way of setting aside the Queen and Council altogether. They had taken care that their rules should not come under the title of 'General Order' at all, and yet had applied them to every Union. He begged also to draw attention to another fallacy of the Hon. Member's speech relative to the great and arbitrary powers vested in justices of the peace. He (Mr. Hinde) was not there to dispute with the Hon. Member whether the powers of justices of the peace were arbitrary or not; but could not the Hon. Gentleman draw a distinction between arbitrary powers of administering laws, and arbitrary powers of making laws? (Hear, hear.) There were many faults under the



old system of the Poor-Laws. The law was frequently violated; but still the functionaries under the old law might have been called to account for such violation."—*House of Commons*, March 22, 1841.

"When the Commission was established, it was understood that the new law was to create a new order of things. The law had been in existence ever since 1834, they were now in the year 1841; the Commission had been created to insure uniformity, and yet the decisions of magistrates had been as chequered and various as they had been repugnant to common sense and the principles of humanity. Where were the general rules applicable to all Unions? Was there a single one? No. As far as he could learn, not one general rule had been published applicable to all Poor-Law Unions. But the Poor-Law Commissioners had been at work; they had done something (plenty of mischief) he had heard; they had incorporated 13,000 parishes—how many more remained?—700. Now, trying the question by the rule of three;—if in six years they could incorporate 13,000 parishes, would it take five years more to incorporate 700? Why in the six years had they not incorporated the remaining 700? There might have been obstacles. Some had arisen, it was said, in the metropolis; all the metropolitan parishes had not been incorporated, thanks to the mischievous demagogues. (A laugh.)"—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons*, March 22, 1841.

"Mr. Hawes said, that having from the commencement given his most earnest support to the Poor-Law Bill, and having since attentively watched its operation, no fear of odium would induce him to swerve from the course, to the justice of which all his experience gave increased weight. He must say, that those gentlemen who had testified their disapprobation of the principle of the Bill, by voting against the second reading, had failed to show what they proposed to substitute in its stead. Mr. Canning had declared that, looking at the extent and complication of interests which surrounded a Poor-Law, no Government could be held culpable for leaving the subject untouched. In 1830, not long before the introduction of the Poor-Law Bill, a noble lord (then Mr. Baring) declared, that he saw no means of coping with the increasing demoralization resulting from the existing system of poor-laws. He (Mr. Hawes) thought economy the least important consideration. The point

of greatest importance was the establishment of some control over the administration of relief, not only with regard to the pauper, but with respect to that large class of persons living on the fund intended for the poor—to abolish jobbing. He was convinced of the beneficial working of the law, in a moral point of view, from the testimony of brewers and distillers whose sales had diminished. (Hear, hear.) The Hon. Gentleman seemed to intimate that this resulted from the narrowed means of the poor. Had the Hon. Gentleman ever visited those Unions which he had described as prisons? He could assure him that the old workhouses came far nearer that description, where old and young, virtuous and depraved, were huddled together without cleanliness, order, or classification. Yet that was the law to which they would be driven to return. (Ironical cheers.)"—*Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

"Mr. Duncombe objected to the continuance of the powers of the Commissioners even for a single day; and he did so upon popular grounds, not such as those upon which the Hon. Member for Lambeth had defended the powers of the Commissioners, but grounds that were likely to become too popular for Hon. Members at the next general election, if they persevered with this Bill in its present shape. He had listened attentively to the speeches of the Hon. Members for London and Lambeth, and he confessed he could not discover in either a single argument in favour of continuing the Commissioners for the period of five years. If their arguments were good for anything, it was to prove that the present law could not be carried out without a Central Board; and if such were the case, then the question resolved itself into this—a commission or no commission. (Hear, hear.) Why, then, had not some Hon. Member favourable to a commission at once informed the noble lord that he had made a mistake in having inserted five years, that there ought to be no definite time, and that for the effectual carrying out of the Poor-Law the commission must be perpetual? That certainly was what the Commissioners themselves had said—that was what they had told the country and recorded in their report. Those who had undertaken their defence had not done them that justice which they deserved. Their own language was so simple and unpretending, and so complimentary withal, to both Houses of Parliament, and to legislation generally, that he felt he should not be discharging

his duty to the House or to the country, were he to omit stating what those Commissioners had propounded in their report of last year. The Hon. Member then read a passage from the report, to the effect that it was not for the Commissioners to justify the determination of Parliament in devolving upon them the power of the Legislature for the purpose of giving effect to the Poor-Law Act; but that if such justification were needed, it might be found, inasmuch as the Parliament of this vast empire, not only having the affairs of this great country, but also of our colonies and those of the East-India Company, to attend to, could not afford time for parochial and local legislation. Here was a declaration, that the poor of England were not worthy of the attention of that House (cries of 'Oh!')—that they might vote pensions to a few, and attend to the affairs of the East-India Company, but that they could not attend to the labouring millions of the country! If the passage he had quoted meant anything, it meant that. (Hear, hear.) The Hon. Member for London stated, that the powers of the Commissioners were not arbitrary or despotic; but the Commissioners themselves said, that 'there was another advantage arising from the interposition of an authority between the Parliament and the people, namely, that they could issue detailed regulations regarding legislative law.' Thus it appeared that there was to be a something between the Parliament and the people. According to the Commissioners, the Members of that House must delegate the powers with which they were intrusted for the protection and benefit of the poor to those Commissioners, who stated that that House had more important affairs to attend to than the affairs of that class of the community. In another part of the same report the Commissioners observed, that the style of composition in Acts of Parliament rendered them hardly intelligible to persons who had not, by frequent study, become familiar with their peculiar language (laughter); and that they therefore thought it convenient that some competent authority should expound the intentions of the Legislature. But had those Commissioners themselves been so very explicit as to make the law capable of being understood by every one? They certainly had not, for there were portions of it capable of so many constructions, that they might explain it to-day in one way, and to-morrow in another. If the principle were a

good one, why not have Commissioners to expound other laws? Why not place three lord mayors in Somerset-house to expound the municipal law? (Laughter.) His opinion was, that the Poor-Law would be administered in a more satisfactory manner without any Central Board."—*House of Commons*, March 22, 1841.

"Mr. Hamilton said he should support the continuance of the commission for the shortest possible period, not because he was jealous of the powers devolved, or because he thought the Commissioners wished to act harshly and unjustly, but because he would not be a party to hand over the poor of the country to any set of men, to be dealt with merely according to their will and pleasure, however high they might be in station, or humane in purpose. He was sorry to say, from his own experience as Chairman of a Board of Guardians, that all the late orders from the Commissioners were of that stringent and harsh character represented by the Hon. Member for Finsbury; and it was much to be feared that there were too many Guardians in every Union who would be inclined to take advantage of those stringent regulations."—*Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

"Sir G. Strickland admitted that the powers entrusted to the Commissioners were unconstitutional; the purpose, however, was considered a necessary one, and the period for which they were to exist was but short. He confessed he was much disappointed with the working of the commission. He had hoped that in a much shorter period than seven years they would have been enabled to produce greater uniformity of system throughout the country; and that their proceedings would not have given rise to so many complaints such as had been stated so frequently in the course of these discussions. The present system was very far from being uniform. In some parts the principles of the act were strictly enforced; in others, and particularly in that part of the country where he resided, out-door relief was still extensively administered. He wished that the present system were improved and rendered permanent. He despaired, however, of seeing that effected by means of the commission. He was more inclined to rely on Parliamentary legislation and the practical knowledge to be acquired by the Guardians of Unions. If the commission must be continued, the control of that House should be constantly and vigilantly exercised, and with that



view he should certainly vote for the shorter period."—*Ibid., Ibid.*

"He (Mr. Hawes) defended the Commissioners upon popular grounds and principles. (Hear, hear.) For the first time, under the present law, was the administration of that enormous fund of upwards of £5,000,000 placed in the hands of responsible officers; and from the moment that that had taken place, there was observed a closeness of attention in the administration of the law that had never before been paid to it. If they went back to the old system, they would again be creating 14,000 or 15,000 independent and irresponsible bodies—a course which, he contended, would be highly injurious to the country; for the question was one involving not merely the vital interest of one class of the community, but of the whole country. His Hon. Friend, the Member for Finsbury, said, that the poor had not derived as much benefit under the present as under the former Poor-Law. Was there no evidence before them of any amendment in the condition of the people, of increased attention to their education, to the state of their dwellings, and to those salutary questions which had been more or less brought before that House, and which had never been thought of until the care of the poor was intrusted to responsible persons? He could, if necessary, produce fact after fact to show that, since that had been the case, not only had the wages of the labourer increased, but greater attention had been paid to the moral and physical condition of the poor than at any former period in the history of the country."—*Mr. Hawes, Ibid., Ibid.*

"Mr. Villiers denied that the powers of the Commissioners were unconstitutional. They were appointed by the Crown, they received their salaries from the House of Commons, they were obliged to lay their proceedings before Parliament, and if they misconducted themselves they were liable to be dismissed. It was admitted that the former parochial system did not answer. Something more efficient was required, and the principle of the Commission was a supervision by the state of the parochial management of the poor. In fact, the Commission was only a branch of the Home Department. (Hear, hear.) He had said that the parochial system had failed. He believed that in a district of the Union where he resided the poor were actually farmed out by a pauper, and their treatment was perfectly horrible.—*Mr. W. ATTWOOD*

said, that the advocates of the present system were driven to the necessity of reverting to the worst abuses of the old law, which certainly was not a very high compliment to the present. All the advantages promised by the supporters of the new system—the improved condition of the poor and the economical savings to be effected, were now abandoned; and the only argument urged in favour of the present system was a fear of reverting to the evils of the old one. (Hear.)"—*House of Commons, March 22, 1841.*

"The hon. member then referred to the 54th clause of the Poor-Law Act, under which he said it was in the power of any justice of the peace to prescribe immediate out-door relief in cases of emergency. Hon. members scarcely seemed to be aware of the extent to which out-door relief was at present afforded. It amounted to no less than four-fifths of all the relief granted, in point of value. If hon. members wanted more out-door relief than that, they had better abolish the workhouses altogether and give nothing but out-door relief. But what was the numerical amount of out-door relief afforded under the present law? The number of paupers so relieved at the discretion of the Boards of Guardians was 818,632, while the in-door paupers were only 126,519. He wished that those who disapproved of the present system would propound some other, or tell the House what security there would be for the continuance of any system without some superintending control. Take away that control and you take away, in his opinion, the only thing that could give stability and efficiency to any plan. (Hear.) As far as his practical knowledge went, he must say that he had never heard, from any of those persons most deeply interested in a just and satisfactory administration of the law, any of those complaints which had been so strongly put forward by his hon. friend, the member for Finsbury. If his hon. friend would read the proceedings under the old workhouse system, and then examine into the new, he would find that the latter was not of that harsh character which he had ascribed to it. With regard to the question of popularity or unpopularity, he begged to say he held his seat in that House upon no such kind of tenure. If the measure were one which he could defend on principle he would do so independently of such a question, and in this instance he was prepared to share in any unpopularity that might be attached to his

continuous and consistent support of the present Poor-Law."—*Mr. Hawes, House of Commons, March 22, 1841.*

"Sir E. KNATCHBULL wished to define the powers of the Commissioners before he was called upon to fix the term of their continuance. He did not know what shape the bill might assume when the other clauses should be disposed of. It might be essentially different from what it was at present, and the period for which he should vote must therefore very much depend on the character of the powers vested in the Commissioners.

Lord G. SOMERSET thought it would be very inconvenient to legislate what the Commissioners should do until it was decided whether they were to be continued or not. He should certainly vote for the continuance of the commission for five years; but he should reserve to himself the full right at a future stage of the bill, probably on the report, unless the clauses were so modified as to meet his approbation, to limit the duration of the Commission as much as he should think proper.

Sir E. KNATCHBULL, reserving to himself the same power of proposing, on the report, a reduced term of years, or, if the bill were not very much modified, of opposing it *in toto* upon the third reading, declined to press his motion for the postponement of the clause.

Colonel SIBTHORP expressed his deep regret that his right hon. friend would not divide upon this question. If the bill was to be continued for five years the house was at least entitled to have an answer to the question he put, namely, what was to be the number of Assistant-Commissioners and other officers.

Lord J. RUSSELL said, he had stated on a former occasion that the number of Assistant-Commissioners in England and Wales should be reduced to 12.

Colonel SIBTHORP suggested that they might at least be reduced to the noble lord's lucky number 'five.' (A laugh.)

The first clause was then put.

Mr. B. WOOD moved a proviso, with the view of reducing the number of Assistant-Commissioners to five, and that they should continue for two years only. The number of parishes to be unionized were only 799,\* of which the population amounted

to but 2,000,000, and from which, at least, 1,000,000 should be deducted as representing large parishes in the metropolis, and other districts which were not to be formed into Unions at all. A much smaller number than 12 Assistant-Commissioners would be more than sufficient for every purpose. He complained that the Assistant-Commissioners were often employed in matters with which they had no concern, and particularly alluded to the recent investigation which had taken place into the circumstances of the death of Elizabeth Wyse, who died of starvation in Kensington, the jury strongly condemning the conduct of the relieving officer and the surgeon of the Union, but neither of the two Assistant-Commissioners (Sir E. Head and Dr. Kay,) who both were employed in the matter, had adopted any step or inflicted any punishment on the offenders. He maintained that the regularly constituted authorities of the country were the proper parties to inquire into such cases. There were many Unions which had not been visited by the Assistant-Commissioners for 18 months, and he thought the expense might as well be spared. At the same time he must say he was not instigated to make this proposition by any opposition to the principle of the bill. He was favourable to the continuance of the commission for five years.

Lord J. RUSSELL opposed the amendment. The Assistant-Commissioners were exceedingly useful in attending boards and explaining the objects of the law and its general operation with regard to relief. If the boards of guardians were permanent, and had other opportunities of learning their duties, a smaller number of Assistant-Commissioners would be sufficient, but in order to enforce something like uniformity of system, 12 was still necessary.

Mr. DARBY complained, not that the Assistant-Commissioners had not visited particular Unions, but that their visits were made when they were not necessary. If the Assistant-Commissioners confined themselves to their proper duties, fewer would be wanted.

the Hon. Members in question. Nevertheless, I should say that neither of the Hon. Members' statistics is accurate, as they only make the total number of parishes in England and Wales, the one, 13,000 seven hundred, and the other, 13,000 seven hundred and 99; whereas, according to the Commissioners' 5th Report, the number of parishes is 14,490.—G. R. W. B.

\* In page 246, they are stated by Mr. Wakley to be 700; however, both statements were copied from the *Times*, which is generally very correct in its reports, and in these instances doubtless printed the numerals as spoken by



Mr. C. WOOD rather feared the noble lord had carried reduction too far.

LORD G. SOMERSET had presented a petition to-night from the guardians of a Union who stated that they got on remarkably well, so long as the Assistant-Commissioners kept away from them. He was glad to hear that the noble lord intended to reduce the number of Assistant-Commissioners. He wished, however, to know whether the noble lord would have any objection to insert in the present bill the *maximum* number of Assistant-Commissioners to be hereafter appointed. By the present Act of Parliament nine Assistant-Commissioners were appointed, and as many more as might be deemed necessary by the Secretary of State for the Home Department. Would the noble lord give the committee legislative assurance that the *maximum* number of Assistant-Commissioners should not hereafter exceed twelve?

MR. R. PALMER said, that in the course of last year he had received petitions from several boards of guardians in the county (Berkshire) which he had the honour to represent, and the object of all those petitions had been to state that there was no necessity for so many Assistant-Commissioners, as the duties which they had to perform were completely works of supererogation. The Assistant-Commissioners could hardly have at present as much duty to perform as they had when the new law was in its infancy. The object of Government in appointing them originally was to carry out the Bill by dividing the country into Unions. Now that the Unions, or at least the far greater portion of the Unions, were formed, their duties must generally cease and determine. Their duties must be 'few and far between' in those parts of the country where the Unions were formed. He was therefore anxious for a reduction of their numbers, though he did not know any reason for fixing their number at five, unless it were that it was one for each of the years that the Poor-Law Commission was to last. Whatever opinion he might entertain upon the policy of making the Poor-Law Commissioners permanent—and he was by no means favourably inclined to such policy—he could see no reason for making the Assistant-Commissioners a permanent body. He thought that the house ought to have a legislative assurance that the number of Assistant-Commissioners would not in future exceed twelve.

LORD J. RUSSELL said, that what he

had proposed was this—that in future the Assistant-Commissioners should be 12. The noble lord, the member for Monmouthshire, had asked whether he had any objection to insert a clause in the Bill providing that the number of Assistant-Commissioners should not exceed 12. That would be a limitation to which he was not at present prepared to accede. He had no objection to state that there would not be more than 12 Assistant-Commissioners appointed; but he would not fix their number at that limit in the Bill, for he could not make such a limitation in the English Bill without inserting a similar limitation in the Irish Bill. Now as the system of Unions and of workhouses was quite new in Ireland, he could not tell how many Assistant-Commissioners might be wanted to carry the Bill into effect in that country.

MR. HUME suggested that the committee should leave the number of Assistant-Commissioners at 12, as the noble lord suggested. As their salaries were voted annually by the house, the house would always retain in its own hands the opportunity of fixing their numbers.

MR. S. HERBERT felt inclined to limit the duration of the commission to a shorter period than five years, but at the same time was not disposed to diminish the number of Assistant-Commissioners. He anticipated that the commission would not terminate at the end of five years, but it would be wholesome for the Commissioners to know that it was not intended that their power should be permanent. Without meaning any imputation on their honour and integrity, he must say that the Commissioners were liable to commit errors in judgment, and particularly this error, that, instead of punishing any maladministration of the law they endeavoured to stifle all inquiry into it, under the idea that the publicity given to such maladministration would injure the system in public opinion. Now, in a country like this, inquiry could not be stifled. It would therefore be more useful for them to show that, wherever abuses were discovered in the administration of the law, they were resolved to check and punish them. He thought that it would be very useful, if once a-year an opportunity were afforded to the house of making observations upon their conduct. They might thus receive advice like that which the right hon. member for Tamworth had that night administered to them—advice which would render them more careful in the

administration of powers which, if they were not counterbalanced by the necessity of the case, would certainly be objectionable. He should not vote for the present amendment, but should reserve himself for the bringing up of the report, when he would give his vote respecting the duration of the powers of the Commissioners in such a manner as the alterations to be made in the Bill might hereafter require. [Such, we believe, was the substance of the hon. member's observations; but the indistinct tone in which he spoke, and the general confusion of the house, rendered him almost inaudible in the gallery.]

Mr. B. WOOD, amid great confusion, said, that after the observations which he had just heard, he would not put the committee to the trouble of dividing, but would withdraw his amendment. (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN was putting the question, 'That the amendment by leave be withdrawn,' when

Colonel SIBTHORP said, that if such a course were adopted he should move that the chairman report progress and ask leave to sit again. (Hear, hear.) Two amendments had been proposed and then withdrawn, although the movers of both had threatened to divide the committee upon them. This was converting the business of the House of Commons into a mere farce. ('Hear, hear,' and laughter.) He objected not only to appointing 12 Assistant-Commissioners, but also to appointing any Assistant-Commissioners at all. ('Hear, hear,' cries of 'Divide,' and great confusion.)

The committee then divided, when there appeared—

For the amendment..... 46

Against it ..... 191

Majority ..... 145"

—March 19, 1841.

"He had had some experience of the operation of the old law in the south of England, and from that experience he arrived at the conclusion that, in many respects, the alterations in the law had been beneficial."—*Lord Francis Egerton*, March 22, 1841.

"Now, as the question was, whether they were to repeal the new law and return to the law which existed previous to 1834, he called on the house to examine how the system in operation previous to that period affected the able-bodied labourers

themselves, and how they were affected by the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. He would not go at length into a discussion of the state of the able-bodied labourers previous to 1834, but should confine himself to a few facts stated in the report of the committee on which the new law was chiefly founded. Previous to 1834, it was the universal practice for the agricultural labourers to receive very low wages from the farmers, but they received some weekly help from the parish, so that one way or other they were in general more or less supported out of the rates. What was the consequence? The first effect was, that no labourer received remuneration in proportion to the value of his labour; therefore the employers considered only, not who was the most useful and skilful labourer, but who was the man likely to be the most burdensome to the parish. The effect of this was, that numbers of skilful labourers were refused an opportunity of earning wages, and were thrown entirely upon the parish for subsistence. In the evidence collected by the Assistant-Commissioners in 1832 and 1833, it was distinctly proved that when labourers came by any means possessed of a small sum of money, they were refused employment till their money was spent. One instance of this was furnished from Royston. In that parish a person had acquired considerable wealth, which he left in legacies to a number of labourers, to whom he was related, and when they received their money the parish authorities refused to find labour for them. The consequence of this was, that those persons were thrown into a state of complete idleness, and compelled to spend their money in beer-shops. The refusal of employment prevented them from laying up their money in savings'-banks, and they spent their time in idleness and dissipation. There was another case of a similar nature furnished by a neighbouring parish. In that instance a person was compelled to take two labourers from the parish, and to discharge two excellent and honest servants, in whom he had the utmost confidence. One of these labourers, John Watt, had, by a long course of industry and economy, saved £100; and on being dismissed he applied in vain to the farmers and to the parish for re-employment. The money he had saved by honest industry prevented him from being employed. He had a brother, who had also saved money, and was in consequence refused employment in the district to which he belonged. Now,



it was under the old system that these two persons, against whose characters and conduct no complaint could be made, were condemned to corrupting and demoralizing idleness. He could multiply cases of a similar kind, but he should not trespass further on the time of the house. He could show that in another case a person had been condemned to idleness and refused employment in consequence of having been enabled by honest industry, to furnish his cottage better than the cottages of his neighbours, and to purchase two cows. Such was the effect of the old system, and yet the hon. member for Oldham said he was prepared to return to that system, and that, under the new law, no distinction was made between the honest man and the greatest vagabond in England. It, however, did make a distinction between the honest man and the vagabond; it refused the vagabond relief; it left him to be punished by the laws which he had violated, but it provided support for the honest and industrious. But the system which the hon. member proposed to restore made no distinction between the honest man and the greatest vagabond in England. It relieved all, but it also punished, by condemning to idleness, the honest and the industrious. A direct discouragement was given to all exertion. Sobriety and industry were actually punished under the old law, and idleness and immorality were the consequences. But this was not all. Look at the effects of such a system on the population of country parishes. The whole labouring population in the southern districts were reduced to a state of degradation, and their morals were destroyed. They were employed at the most disgusting and degrading labour. They were not unfrequently employed in digging holes, and, immediately after, in filling them up again. Such was the nature of the employment afforded to the able-bodied labourers under the system which the hon. member for Oldham wished to restore. But that was not all. In the inquiry made by the Poor-Law Commissioners it was found that the able-bodied labourers were often paid for standing in the pound. He held in his hand the report of the Assistant-Poor-Law Commissioners, and in that report he perceived that in the books of one parish they had visited (we could not catch the name), they found an entry of £6 7s. paid to a number of able-bodied men and boys, for standing in a state of complete idleness in the pound. That

was one of the effects of the system which the friends of the poor wished to re-establish. (Cries of 'No, no.')

Nor was it by any means an unusual practice to put up the labouring poor to auction. The labour of honest Englishmen was put up, without their consent, to public auction. The question was, what the labourer and his family required for their support, and then he was put up at a regular auction, at which the farmers attended. One would bid half-a-crown, another 3s., another 4s., and, perhaps, another 5s., and the labour of the man was knocked down to the highest bidder. The farmer who would give 5s. per week had the labour of the unfortunate man assigned to him without any consent on his part, and the parish made up the 3s. or 4s. which might be required to make up what was considered to be a sufficient allowance for the pauper and his family. Now, he would ask, what inducement was there, under such a system as that, for a man to work? And yet, if he was considered to be idle beyond a certain point, he was taken before the justices and punished. But he might be the ablest, steadiest, and most industrious man, and there would be no hope for him; nothing in prospect was there for him but to labour on compulsion, and on compulsion alone. Such was the system which existed previously to the year 1834, a system precisely similar to that under which the negroes in the West Indies were placed. The English labourer was to all intents and purposes a white slave. The whole labouring population was degraded to that system which would continue in the West Indies for two years longer. The labouring man, then, had no inducement under that system to be industrious, but the fear of punishment and additional misery; all hope of rising in life was destroyed and withdrawn from his mind: there was no prospect before him but that of dragging through, from infancy to old age, a degraded and wretched state of existence. Indeed, the English labourer was then in a far worse state than the slaves in the West Indies, because, in a short time, they had a hope of being relieved from their state of bondage. Up to the year 1834 the system was only getting worse; partial efforts were made to break through it, but they were too partial, and proved to be ineffectual. The poison had corrupted the social state of every parish, and the gangrene, if he might use the expression, was making its

fatal progress from year to year, and its destructive influence becoming more extended, for those districts into which it once made its way seldom, if ever, escaped from it again. He would ask, then, was the House prepared to revert to that state of things? (Hear.) He admitted that the measure of 1834 was a strong measure; but was just such a measure as the desperate state of the organic disease in the political society of this country required, it was calculated for and adapted to the correction, if not the eradication of that disease. Would the House, at the request of the hon. member, repeal the measure of 1834, and return to the evils of the former system? It was perfectly true, as the hon. member had stated, that under the old law there did exist the means for the administration of relief to the poor, but there were no adequate means to secure its proper distribution. Would the House commit that injustice against the poor man, and the whole population, to return to the old and cruel system, the practical working of which had been productive of the most dreadful consequences to society at large? He would go further, and say that any system which made relief desirable must necessarily be attended with such consequences. If men could not maintain themselves, and if they must be maintained by the community, the maintenance should be given only under severe laws of restraint, or all those evils which had resulted from the former allowance system, more especially in the southern and midland counties of England, would follow. With respect to the relief of the distressed, the sick, the aged, and the really impotent among the poor, those who had not any means or mode of supporting themselves, or of earning their subsistence, he would say that the system under the Poor-Law Amendment-Act would be the greatest possible blessing. They were not now left to the mercy of irresponsible overseers or tumultuous vestries, or to the uncertain result of an appeal to magistrates. There was now in every district a body representing the interests of that district, a body of Guardians and paid Overseers appointed for the administration of relief, and above them there were the Commissioners and Assistant-Commissioners, whose duty it was to punish all instances of neglect of the really destitute and suffering poor. It was known that the power of those authorities had been usefully exerted. Any cases of neglect of the sick, or im-

potent, or destitute poor, was brought before the Commissioners, and promptly inquired into, and redressed by prompt punishment of the guilty. Was that the state of things under the old law? Did not every hon. member recollect how often, under the old law, they were accustomed to hear of the sick and dying pauper being transmitted from parish to parish, each trying to get rid of the onus of maintaining the suffering and distressed individual? (Hear.) The disputes about settlement led continually to such cases. Paupers, almost in the agonies of death, were removed by an order of the magistrates from one district to another; they were carried hither and thither in carts, and were banded about from workhouse to workhouse, being denied relief at all, because neither parish would acknowledge the settlement. Women on the point of being delivered, in the very agonies of child-birth, were still more exposed. (Loud cries of 'Hear, hear.') The most dreadful cruelty and oppression was practised upon them. But to all that cruelty and oppression an end was now put. (Renewed cries of 'Hear.') Relief was now promptly afforded where relief was necessary. The sick, the dying, the impotent, women and children, and the aged, could obtain relief more certainly and promptly than they did under the old system. With respect to the able-bodied, undoubtedly relief was not so lavishly given to them as formerly; they did not, good and bad, indiscriminately receive large allowances; but, in return for this, the really industrious were now enabled, without being indebted to any man, to maintain themselves in comfort, and frequently, by their industry, to raise themselves to a better condition in life than they were in before. These were the principles of the Act which the hon. member opposed and sought to destroy. He trusted that the decisive majority by which the proposition of the hon. member would be rejected by the House, would show that they entertained a real regard for the poor and the necessitous. (Hear.) — *Viscount Howick, House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

"The change which the Bill proposed to make in the law of bastardy, was, he must admit, a bold measure; but it was, at the same time, a good one. At present, the law threw it upon the man to avoid the offence, and visited him with penalties if he committed it. The law appeared, also, to leave the woman without any induce-



ment to join in the commission of it; but, in point of fact, it did not leave her without that inducement. The man found one enemy in the woman's breast to beat a parley in his favour, and that was her passions; and then, when the parley was beaten, he found another enemy ready to recommend a surrender, and that was not her passions, but her calculations. Then came the suggestions,—The law is in my favour,—if it comes to the worst, I can make him marry me; I am not doing that which is wrong in itself, provided marriage follows. Thoughts of a warmer nature followed, and sensations which overpower the woman when her passions are strong, and all that is wanted is a soporific to lull her conscience. The law furnished that soporific by enabling her to look forward to a period when marriage would cover the fault. The proposed change was founded on the same principles on which their lordships were accustomed to legislate every day in cases of applications which came before them in consequence of conjugal infirmities. How often had he heard it argued before their lordships, that the husband and the wife ought in such cases to be placed upon a par!—that the wife should have the same right to divorce the husband which the husband now had to divorce the wife, and that the civil law should be introduced into this country for the better protection of female comfort and female honour! 'No;' their lordships had answered, and in the propriety of that answer he fully concurred, 'we will not trust the keeping of a woman's virtue to herself.' To her apply the threats which are to deter from crime—to her apply the menaces which are to prevent her backsliding. If she will not yield of herself, and if you can make it her interest not to yield upon the solicitations of others, the seducer will beat at the door in vain; his object will be frustrated, and yours will be gained. Let this principle be applied to the law of bastardy; let the woman be deprived of the advantages which she possesses at present; let the disadvantages be placed on her side, and the man will have less chance to seduce her from virtue."—*Lord Brougham, House of Lords, July 21, 1834.*

"His Lordship, after giving an historical account of the progress of the Poor-Laws, pointed out the manner in which they had become the source of so much evil. So long as it was supposed that the statutes secured relief only to the 'im-

potent'—to those who, from disease, age, or worn-out faculties of body or mind, were unable to provide for themselves, and to no others,—the law, if not advantageous, had not been detrimental; but the unfortunate words which followed, giving overseers power to set poor people to work, interpreted as these words had been, first to find work for the pauper, and if work could not be obtained, then to provide food, had rendered the provisions of the statutes most pernicious to the poor themselves, no less than to the rich; and all these consequences had been grievously aggravated by the Act of 1796, followed by the system of allowances. What had these consequences been? In the first place, in every part of the country, in districts agricultural, manufacturing, and even commercial, there had grown up the constant and almost regular practice of able-bodied men, preferring a small pittance from the parish, that they might live in idleness, to a larger sum in the shape of wages for which they would have to work. In more than one or two places, they were found to prefer a pittance of 3s. 6d., to wages much higher in amount, because, they said, it was a certainty, and enabled them to be idle. Instead of being idle, however, they were the greatest workers of mischief in the country, the ready followers, if not the ringleaders, of every villainy and depredation committed in their neighbourhood. The very boatmen on the Kentish coast, who formerly would have risked their lives, even in the worst weather, for the support of their families, would not now go out in the winter; for, said they, we have a right to be supported by the parish. Nay, when persons thus supported by the parish were obliged to work, they complained, and, in some instances, had actually appealed from the overseers to the magistrates, on the ground that they were compelled to work as much as labourers who received no parish aid. Another consequence had been that, in many places, those who received parish relief, and were employed by the parish, were better off, in point of wages, than the industrious labourer who strove to support himself by his own efforts. It appeared from the report of the Commissioners that, in some parts of Sussex, and in the Isle of Wight, 10s. a-week was given to the paupers for working a certain number of hours in the day, while the independent labourer, who worked a much longer time, had only

12s. In the Isle of Wight, 240 pauper labourers struck, because they were obliged to work as long as other labourers for smaller wages, and after having almost resorted to force, they made good their demand. Then came a still worse principle—that which substituted the parish rate for a man's nearest relations. The law of nature ordained that a parent should support his child, and a child his parents; but the Poor-Laws stepped in, and told them to do no such thing, for it would take that duty upon itself. Such a law denaturalized men and made them act in a way of which they otherwise never would have dreamed; it made them say, 'I will expose my children in the streets, unless you relieve them. I will turn my bedridden mother out of the house, and lay her down at the overseer's door, unless you order me relief for her.' These evils, ruinous in themselves, were all aggravated by the tendency of the system, which produced them, to increase the number of individuals subjected to their influence; for the wit of man could not have devised a more direct encouragement to improvident marriages than was afforded by the present system of the Poor-Laws, of which this was, in fact, the corner-stone. The language which the law held out to the poor was this:—"Contract marriages if you please, and your children shall be supported at the expense of the parish;" thus tempting the poor man into an imprudent marriage—too probable an event in itself to require any legislative incentive—instead of inducing him to postpone marriage, till he had the means of supporting a family. The consequences of all this on the property of the country were as melancholy as any other effects resulting from the Poor-Laws. He would not say that many farms were deserted, and many parishes given up to waste (though he knew of one or two farms, and of one parish, which were in that condition); but the system was tending to that point, and the fact of one parish being thrown out of cultivation inevitably tended to throw three or four others into waste. Nor was it only our fields which suffered; the character of the people which cultivated them was degraded. Such a system took away all sense of shame; it deprived men of all feelings of personal dignity, self-respect, and independence, and prevented them from seeking, in the honest paths of industry, support for themselves and their families. Formerly it was considered a

disgrace, nay, almost something criminal, to be dependent upon the poor-rates; but now the peasantry demanded the parish allowance with an erect port and a manly air, or rather they called for it with a sturdy gait, and he would not say a manly, but a masterful port. They asked for it as masters; and it was well known that they actually domineered over the parochial officers. By this strange and monstrous system, the pauper was tormented with all the ills—not of poverty, but of riches—all the evils, not of labour, but of pampered idleness—with that hypochondriasis which, in palaces, arose from want of occupation, and formed the greatest curse of wealth. The report proved that the pauper spent his time lounging about idle, half asleep during one part, wholly asleep during the remaining part of the day, and sleepless at night in consequence of the idleness of his day. Industry, the greatest preservative against impure passion and wrong deeds, was wanting; and the consequences were, want of chastity, child murder, and the long catalogue of crimes which deformed our calendars, in spite of all improvements and extension of education."—*Lord Brougham, House of Lords, July 21, 1834.*

"The great principles of the proposed plan, then, went to this, to stop the allowance system—to deprive the magistracy of the power of ordering out-door relief—to alter in certain cases the constitution of parochial vestries—to give large discretionary powers to the Central Commissioners—to simplify the law of settlement and removal—to render the mother of an illegitimate child liable to support it, and save from imprisonment for its aliment the putative father, to whom she might swear it."—*Lord Althorp, House of Commons, April 17, 1834*

"The introduction of a principle which went to punish the female who gave birth to an illegitimate child, and not the father, had been objected to; but such was the uniform course of legislation; such was the law of the land already; such was the principle on which all moralists had proceeded, and on which also Parliament proceeded every day in the year; and such was the principle upon which the laws of society at present stood. It was no novelty; for in 1830 a gentleman, examined before a Committee of that House on the Poor-Law, had stated his opinion, that 'We shall never be able to check the birth of bastard children by



throwing the onus upon the man; and I feel strongly convinced that, until the law of the country is assimilated to the law of nature, and to the law of every other country, by throwing the onus more upon the female, the getting of bastard children will never be checked.' And what said the law? Ever since the time of James I., bastardy had been regarded and punished as a crime in the woman, who was liable to be sent to prison or the house of correction, while the man was suffered to escape. Yet this principle was no more than that which the Commissioners had laid down, and which had been designated by those who had assailed and attacked them, as unmanly, detestable, and abhorrent to every principle of humanity. Common sense, indeed, dictated that want of chastity was a much more grievous offence in woman than in man, and those who thought otherwise could have considered the subject very superficially. Nay, any individual, who pretended to doubt it, was guilty of the grossest hypocrisy—for, would any man hesitate to say, that if he saw his daughter in a house of ill-fame, he would hold her in a very different light than that in which he would regard his son, if he discovered him in the same situation? The laws of society took precisely the same view of the subject: a virtuous woman was regarded as the bond of society; and when she once lost her virtue, 'a pearl of great price,' adieu to all decorum and decency in society; and if female chastity was once at a discount, not merely were the bonds of society loosened, but actually broken asunder. With the woman the decision of the question rested. Without her consent the consent of the man was useless, and the law of the land decided that the great part of the blame rested with her. But there was another question. Was the putative father always the real father? Was the man, who was compelled to maintain the child, the person who, either by the laws of nature, or of common justice, ought to provide for its support? Everyone knew the contrary. Why, was not something like this the common practice? The paramour of a young woman, after seducing her, persuades her to palm the child on another man, or, after corrupting her chastity and destroying her honesty, he devises means to make her the wife of another, and aggravates his crime by committing adultery. The general practice was, for the woman to choose the

wealthier man, and swear the child to him, whether he was the father or not. There was perjury on the part of the woman, dishonesty on the part of the man; and these combined, led to the greatest injustice and oppression. The present law encouraged and fostered a crime only second to murder—the detestable crime of wilful and corrupt perjury." —*Lord Brougham, House of Lords, July, 1834.*

"Next came the powers of the Commissioners. In the first place, as it was desirable to have one uniform system operating over the whole country, they were to have power to make general rules and orders as to the mode of relief, and for the regulation of workhouses, and the mode of relief afforded therein. As a check against any abuse, every such rule, order, or regulation, so proposed by the Commissioners, would be submitted to the Secretary of State; forty days were to elapse before it could be brought into operation; and during that period it should be competent, by an order of Council, issued for that purpose, to prevent it from being carried into effect. The discretionary powers proposed to be granted to the Commissioners, were, no doubt, *extraordinary*; but, at the same time, it would be utterly impossible to carry an improvement in the present system of Poor-Laws into effect, without acting upon great discretionary powers, and there was no more proper quarter in which that necessary power could be vested. The Commissioners would further have power to make specific rules and orders for the regulation and mode of relief of the poor in separate districts and parishes,—to form Unions of parishes, in order to make larger districts,—to arrange classifications of poor in the same or different workhouses,—to exercise a general control in such Unions as might be established without their consent,—and to dissolve Unions which might now exist. Unions having been once formed, each parish in the Union would have to maintain its own poor, or contribute to the general fund the proportion of expense which it had hitherto borne by itself. The individual parishes, if the vestries in each parish should agree to such a proposition, might make a different arrangement; but it was desirable, that parishes should have power to unite for the purposes of parochial settlements, and for the poor-rates altogether. The Commissioners would, likewise, have

power to call the attention of parishes and Unions to the state of their workhouse establishments, and to suggest to them the propriety of adding to those formed, or of building separate and distinct establishments."—*Lord Althorp, House of Commons*, April 17, 1834.

"The Lord Chancellor, Earl of Winchester, and Duke of Wellington, contended for the necessity of a Central Board. The object of it was to bring things back to their former state; to put them in the right track; to do all that those acquainted with the subject knew it would do; to lop off excrescences; do away with abuses; bring back things to their pristine state; and reform the system according to the original meaning and construction of the Act on which it was founded. To do all this required a vigorous hand, and that vigour could be exercised only by vesting a discretionary power in a few persons. These Commissioners, it should be remembered, would be appointed only for a limited time; and, when that time expired, the administration of the Poor-Laws might be returned to those in whose hands it was now vested, with the benefit of the experience of the improved system to guide them in their future management."—*Annual Register*, 1834.

"The experience of every man taught him that one of the effects of the Bastardy laws was to inflict great mischief on the female population. Another was, that it diminished the inducements of every female to retain her chastity. A third effect of these laws was, that, under the operation of the existing enactments, females attempted, by the number of their bastards, to obtain a settlement in marriage, and the tendency of the existing law counteracted, in a great degree, that moral feeling on which success in this question mainly depended. A fourth was, that if the allowance charged for the child upon the father was large, it was given to the mother, whether she wanted it or not. He was afraid that perjury was often committed by the mothers to obtain a large allowance from men who had never had the slightest connexion with them; at any rate, there was a strong inducement for a woman to filiate her child upon a man who had not begotten it, provided he was rich and could make a large allowance. Another effect of this system was, that women, with two or three bastard children, were often in a better situation than those women who had none. Such were the

most prominent evils arising from the existence of our present code of Bastardy laws. They took from the woman every feeling which was calculated to nourish modesty of thought, and delicacy of conduct. They placed a check upon the man, and held out to the woman an inducement to violate the laws of chastity. The check was applied in the quarter where it was calculated to be the weakest, whilst the inducement was held out to the other sex, as if for the purpose of counteracting the great moral check which arises out of the principles of human nature. He was satisfied that, for many years past, the existing law had been most detrimental in its consequences upon the lower orders. An alteration in it was imperiously demanded, especially so far as related to women being compelled to filiate their children on some men or other, even before the children were born. After the children were so filiated, the justice was empowered to commit the putative fathers to prison in default of bail, and that too, without calling upon them to show cause against the order."—*Lord Althorp, House of Commons*, 1834.

"He defended the first part of the Government plan, which consisted in entrusting the Poor-Laws to a Board of Commissioners. He admitted that this was an anomalous course of legislation, and that the Board should be vested with great and extensive powers; but this was rendered unavoidable by the necessity of the case. A discretionary power must be vested somewhere to carry into effect the better principles now to be introduced. The local magistrates could not be the fittest depositaries of this power, because, however good their intentions, they would not have the command of those sources of information and comparison which were open to a Board of Commissioners; and, however excellent their motives, they would be apt to be biassed by local prejudices and feelings. This power, therefore, was proposed to be vested in a Central Board of Commissioners to be named by the king. Above all things, it would be necessary, even before extending any discretionary power, to fix a day on which the allowance system should cease, and in the Bill it would be fixed in some of the summer months, when the labourers were in full employment. This allowance system, the practice of supporting a labourer by the parish paying part of his wages, and his employer the other, was the foundation of



almost all other evils; and until it was completely got rid of, any attempt at amending the Poor-Laws would be utterly useless. Where this system prevailed, the farmer obtained an advantage to which he had no right, namely, assistance from parochial funds to pay those whom he employed in his own labour. Its abolition was necessary for the benefit of the labourers themselves. Some, indeed, had supposed that, as the labourer at present had the wages received from his employer increased by an addition from the parochial funds, (the addition being regulated according to the number of his family), the effect of taking away that assistance would be to make it impossible for him to maintain himself and family. Such would not be the case. As the labourer regarded the parochial assistance, added to the wages he received from his employer, as making the total wages to which he was entitled for his labour and industry, in a very short time after the removal of that assistance, wages would rise to an equivalent amount; and as soon as that was the case, the labourer would be placed in a situation infinitely preferable to that in which he at present stood.”—*Lord Althorp, House of Commons, April 17, 1834.*

“There still remained one point of great importance, both to morality and to the Poor-Laws, the alimient of illegitimate children. Government had a clear conviction, that the present state of the law in this respect, was a direct encouragement to vice and immorality; that the effects of imprisoning the reputed fathers of illegitimate offspring, frequently the finest young men in the country, was to demoralize and corrupt them; and that the consequent mischief and injury inflicted upon the whole community was incalculable. As the law at present stood, if a woman chose to swear that she was pregnant of an illegitimate child, the party, whom she charged upon oath as the father, was *ipso facto* liable to be committed to prison until he could find security for the maintenance and support of the child. Every man must know the difficulty to which a labourer in husbandry, so situated, would be exposed; and if the difficulty of finding securities was not surmounted, the effect of the law was the committal at once of the individual to prison for five or six months, there to be associated with the very worst of characters. The intended Bill would, therefore, take away this power of impri-

sonment, and, at the same time, make the mother liable for the support of her child, in the manner and mode of a pauper widow.”—*Ibid.*

“Not only is the New Poor-Law a precedent against all landed and funded rights, but since two bishops (more for aught I know) are recorded in the history of last year as unqualifiedly approving it, I will just call attention to the use of which it is capable *against the existing rights of the clergy*. Could my concealment of such possibilities serve any good end, no power should wring them from me; but the subtilty of the enemy far outstrips the penetration of friends, and my catalogue is brief to that which agitators are preparing for their own use, whenever the time may promise advantage from its production. Who is jealous of the existing interests of the clergy, and I am not? Who cries shame! shame! against all who call that Church Reform, which is to be effected by injustice, and I will not re-echo their cry? Who is warm on such subjects, and I burn not? But have not the Bishops of London and Chester put the gag upon our mouths? Has not the expediency of the New Poor-Law at once broken our shield? It has: for where, I ask, is shown any respect for ‘*the existing rights of the poor*’? Certainly not in the hearts and principles of the Commissioners: and what then, let me ask, will the Bishops of London and Chester say, if it should, by some change, so happen that the House of Commons ever votes it expedient to trust the administration of the ecclesiastical revenues to three lay Commissioners? What language would they find strong enough against such a church law? Would their lordships concur in such expediency? Who are to be the supreme court to settle possible differences? Would their lordships think the ‘*existing interests*’ of pluralists and sinecurists, and absentees very secure under such a commission? Or, suppose that the House of Commons was to select three parochial clergymen, instead of the three estates of the realm, to arrange matters, such as stipends, &c., between incumbents and curates, and invest such a Commission with irresponsible power, what would their lordships say then? Or, suppose that three clergymen had been appointed to this new ecclesiastical Commission, instead of Peers, Ministers, and Bishops, to arrange the diocesses and episcopal revenues, what would their lordships have said

then? *that it was simply a question of expediency?* Would they then be satisfied that Lord Brougham should share the blame with them? 'Existing interests!!' are the clergy alone to stand, the poor alone to fall?"—*"Church Reform," by the Rev. Edward Duncombe, 1835.*

"If what I have already exposed of the anti-parochial character of Centralization be not enough to call the Bishops of London and Chester to repentance for lending themselves to *revive* the monster in England, I yet am not quite without hope, that what I am now bringing forward may impress them with a little more regard for the consequences to poor people, and country parsons, before they take further steps against us. I mark '*revive* this monster centralization;' for, as I am bound to send copies of this address to all those on the upper seats, whose names I write, I am not such a fool as to give those Bishops the advantage over us, which they would derive if they had reason to doubt my knowledge of what no men know better than themselves—namely, that this centralization is not an original scheme for withdrawing power and wealth from country parishes and parochial clergy to concentrate everything in the hands of a few, called a 'Board' in London. It is merely an old trick become new in England. It is so stale in France, that there are regicidal and revolutionary attempts every year to try any change. Yes, this innovation upon the British constitution, to which the Bishops of London and Chester have committed themselves, and unhappily, to a certain extent, the whole church in which they are members and authorities, is neither more nor less than simple Romanism in the State! That is the naked truth. Centralization, as it has begun, is but the narrow end of the immeasurable wedge, which was driven by Rome—till it impoverished all parishes, divided all nations, and deposed sovereigns, until Cæsar became synonymous with Satan—till the emperors and hierarchy, which rose as the agents of universal reform, of civil and religious liberty through all the world, fell the victims of the deceitfulness of their own hearts."—*"Justice and Centralization," by the Rev. Edw. Duncombe (Rector of Newton Kyme, near Tadcaster), 1840.*

"The only alteration made in the clauses regarding the Commissioners and their powers, was an addition proposed by the Duke of Wellington to the effect,

that they should be bound to keep a record of each letter received, the date of its reception, the person from whom it came, the subject to which it related, and the minute of any answer given to it, or made thereon, and also, where the Commissioners differed, of the opinion of each Commissioner; and that a copy of such record be transmitted to the Secretary of State once a-year or oftener if required."—*House of Lords, July, 1834.*

Sir R. Peel said he was not about to enter into the consideration of the question, but he felt bound to state how, and upon what grounds, he intended to vote. He intended to vote for a direct negative upon the proposition of the hon. member for Oldham, (hear,) and he could not consent to vote for the proposition just made to the House by the hon. and learned gentleman on his left,\* namely, that this question should not be put, and that Parliament should express no opinion on it. When he recollected that four years ago there was a universal impression on the part of Parliament, and on the part of the country, that the mode of administering relief then in existence was pregnant with the most injurious consequences,—that it was, in point of fact, dissolving property, and that, in the dissolution of property, they were doing most irreparable injury to the poor, inasmuch as it was not merely property itself that was injured, but that, by the mode of its appropriation, they were relaxing all the springs of industry, and holding out a temptation to idleness. When he recollected that Parliament, with the universal consent of the country, determined to make a great experiment for the purpose of recovering the country from that state of things, he thought it would not now be either fair or candid on the part of Parliament to refuse to pronounce an opinion as to whether that experiment should be adhered to or not. (Hear, hear.) He did believe that the hon. gentleman who had made the first proposition, in compelling a decision on this question, would do more to establish the Poor-Law Act, and to ensure its satisfactory operation, by eliciting the expressed determination, he (Sir R. Peel) hoped, of a large majority of that House, to uphold its principle; that the hon. gentleman would thereby be doing more towards benefiting the principle, and towards the satisfactory operation of the measure itself, than any combination between the ministry and opposition could

\* Mr. D. W. Harvey.



effect; because, in point of fact, while the country was in doubt as to the intention of Parliament, no system could be satisfactory. In his own part of the country, doubts had been entertained as to the propriety of enlarging the workhouses, arising from the expectation of a motion in Parliament for the repeal of the law; and while those doubts were entertained—whether it was intended to adhere to the present, or revert to the old system—they would prevent the satisfactory operation of the law. He did, therefore, rejoice that his hon. friend had taken the means of provoking a decision. A committee was now sitting for the purpose of ascertaining whether, consistently with the maintenance of the principle, it would be proper to make any relaxation in the present measure. Therefore, while they maintained the principle of the existing Poor-Law, it would be perfectly competent for them to apply individual remedies to particular evils, if they should be satisfied, upon the evidence taken before that Committee, that there were grounds for an alteration. But an alteration in the details of a law was a very different question from the maintenance of an existing system. (Hear, hear.) When they were told that abuses existed in the administration of the Poor-Law at present, how, he would ask, could they hope to see that great experiment, which necessity had compelled them to make, carried into operation without cases of abuse and individual hardship? It would be a perfect miracle, and contrary to the ordinary course of human affairs, to recover from evils, such as those in which the previous system was involved, without having individual cases of grievance, which they might deeply lament, but to which it was difficult to apply a remedy. He understood that the committee was appointed with a view to ascertain whether they could, consistently with the maintenance of the principle, relax any of the provisions of the present Poor-Law Act. Now, upon the whole, he was bound to say, considering the magnitude of the experiment, that he thought the experience of the last four years had been quite as satisfactory as any man could have desired. Under these circumstances, believing it to be absolutely necessary, not for the sake of saving the property of the rich, not at all, that was a subordinate part of the question. (Hear.) The object of the experiment of the Poor-Law was not so much to protect property as to elevate

the moral condition of the labouring poor, and invigorate the springs of industry; but, believing it to be necessary for this latter object, it should have his support. In that respect, so far as he had been able to ascertain, he did not think that any wonderful change was or could have been made in four years, but he did think that the experiment had proved successful. He thought that there was a gradually increasing demand for honest labour, and that he had a right to anticipate that the ultimate consequence of this law would be an increased reward for industry. He was therefore of opinion, that it would be discreditable to Parliament to hold out a hope, or apprehension, as it would be to many, that the ancient system would be reverted to. He thought, too, if they did so, that those gentlemen throughout the country who had adhered to the principle of the Bill, and who had thereby subjected themselves to obloquy, would have a fair right to cast blame upon, and on any future occasion refuse to trust to the faith of, Parliament, or to co-operate with them in the furtherance of any law which they might deem necessary to enact. (Hear, hear.)—*House of Commons*, Feb. 20, 1838.

“Mr. Darby said he could not give a silent vote on this occasion, in consequence of what the noble lord at the head of the Home Department had said at the commencement of the session, when he (Mr. Darby) had said that, unless there was some relaxation in the system of relief under the new law, he (Mr. Darby) should be compelled to introduce some amendment. Now, the noble lord opposite (Lord Howick) had said that in the agricultural districts there had been no relaxation of the system; if that had been the case he confessed himself to be guilty of neglecting to do that which he had promised to do. He (Mr. Darby) was prepared to show, that there had been a relaxation in the country districts. He did not complain of it; on the contrary, he thought that the Commissioners had used, in that respect, a wise discretion; but he did not think it right that the noble lord, the Secretary at War, should keep the fact from the public that such a relaxation had taken place. (Hear, hear.) He (Mr. Darby) had received a letter from the Chairman of the Board of Guardians for the Union of Hailsham, in the county of Sussex, stating that without some relaxation of the system it would be impossible to go on. To that letter

the Poor-Law Commissioners had answered, that they had under their consideration the letter of the Board of Guardians, and that they regretted to learn that, owing to the severity of the weather, men had been thrown out of work, and that their families were thereby reduced to a state of destitution. The letter went on to say, that the Commissioners considered, with reference to those circumstances and the state of the workhouse, that out-door relief might be temporarily afforded. (Hear, hear.) This relaxation had been the reason why he had not brought the subject forward, coupled with the circumstance that the Poor-Law Committee had not brought their labours to a close. The Commissioners had, he admitted, allowed that letter to be communicated to other districts in East Sussex, and that course with that permission had been followed. He believed the difficulty of the new law had not arisen from the statute, the 43d of Elizabeth, but from the neglect of that statute. He admitted that it would be difficult to return to that system, but it was strange that the order of the Commissioners of the 28th of July wholly repealed that law, and, instead of task-work, gave the labourer only the shelter of the workhouse. Now, this part of the new law pressed hard upon the man who, though willing, was unable, to maintain himself and his wife and children, and was obliged to enter his family and himself into the workhouse, or otherwise no relief would be afforded him. It was too much for the noble lord opposite (Lord Howick) to say that a workman so situated need not part with his cottage or his furniture; but he begged to know how, when he was deprived of the means of earning something, in consequence of his confinement in a workhouse, such a man was to pay his rent? (Hear, hear.) He (Mr. Darby) would not return to the allowance system, but he thought it was worthy at least of consideration whether some means could not be devised to aid a man who, by being three months out of the twelve in want of employment, might fall into distress, without sending him and his family into a workhouse. (Hear, hear.) He thought that the Commissioners had, by their order of the 28th of July last, drawn the string too tight, and he only hoped it would not break. He had one curious passage of three lines from Blackstone, which had anticipated these difficulties. That passage, after speaking of the 43d of Elizabeth, said, 'that the

excellent scheme of employing the able-bodied labourers having been departed from, we cannot but observe what a miserable shift and low expedient it was for them to attempt to patch the flaws thereby occasioned.' One of these flaws was the putting up of labourers to auction, and that was illegal even under the old law. But the question for the House to decide was, whether they would get rid of the present law or not, and if they did, what was the substitute which they would propose in its place. (Hear, hear.) He would ask hon. members, if the House repealed this law to-morrow, in what situation the country would be placed?"—*Ibid.*

"He was now in possession of a copy of the rules, orders, and regulations sent to him by the Commissioners at the time he had been elected one of the Guardians. It had been said, that the Commissioners had allowed the use of beer in the metropolitan workhouses. Now, in those orders, which he held in his hand, it was specially ordered that no beer should be allowed. This order was dated early in the year 1836, and the loose manner in which they were drawn so much showed the inexperience of the Commissioners, that he doubted whether Mr. F. Lewis, or Mr. Shaw Lefevre, or Mr. Nicholls, or Mr. Chadwick, the penny-a-liner, had ever had anything to do with the poor of any parish in the kingdom. (A laugh.) Mr. Chadwick, some years ago, had probably been in a situation to render it likely that he might himself have applied to the overseers for relief (loud laughter), and he (Mr. Murphy) remembered the time when he almost appeared in that situation. The rule or order to which he adverted stated, that no pauper should have or use any wine, beer, or other spirituous or fermented liquors. Such was the rule of 1836, a rule which one of the Commissioners had told him (Mr. Murphy) could not be altered under any circumstances. But it had been altered, because the Guardians of the parishes of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, of St. George's, and several others, had declared that they would give their respective paupers beer, whether the Commissioners liked it or not, and in no one instance had the auditors appointed by the Commissioners, though nominally elected by the Guardians, dared to refuse to allow the charge for the supply to the poor of table-beer. But why had this alteration been made? Why, because, as had been



justly said, the Commissioners wanted to work their way quietly with the people of England, and he was ashamed to say that some of the Guardians in one of the parishes which had been alluded to, and who originally had been quite against the rules, had told him that the Poor-Law diet was not quite so objectionable as they had thought it was ('Hear,' and 'Shame!'), for now they were allowed to give them beer. But let these Commissioners but once get a footing in the north, and both the south of England and the metropolitan parishes would be brought to obey all the objectionable rules and orders contained in the document with which he had been furnished by the Commissioners themselves. Why, it was manifest that, in many parts of the country, the Guardians were no better than slaves to the Commissioners. (Hear, hear.) Now, in those orders there was a remarkable circumstance, to which he begged to call attention, because it bore upon the views of a noble and learned lord who had been a patron of this Bill, and who had secured to himself for his services a snug £5,000 per annum. That noble and learned lord had always said 'educate the people.' So said he (Mr. Murphy); but the Poor-Law Commissioners did not say so, for their order directed the Board of Guardians to elect a certain number of officers, and, if they thought proper, then to elect a schoolmaster, a chaplain, and a porter to the workhouse. Now, he should have thought, that a man who had secured £5,000 a-year by his education, would have looked to the education of others, for which he had so long declaimed. (Cheers.) But under the orders the Guardians might, if they thought proper, appoint a schoolmaster, a chaplain, and a porter, who alone should open the door; and so, if no porter was appointed, there would not, according to those orders, be any person to let others either in or out. (Loud laughter.) Did not this show how inexperienced were the men to whom the country paid £2,000 a-year each for their trouble? (Hear, hear.) Well, but there was a rule which said that the Board of Guardians shall, at their discretion, if they think necessary, suspend from all performance of his or her duties any medical officer, any relieving officer, any master of a workhouse, any matron of a workhouse, and report the same, with the causes thereof, to the Board of Commissioners in Somerset-house. He hoped that some person was present from the parish of

St. Paul, Covent-garden, inasmuch as that which he should have occasion to say upon the point he had just alluded to had reference to that parish. Now, the meeting had heard that they allowed the poor people to go out on a Sunday, and to see their friends. But it was not so according to the rules which had been sent down to him by the Commissioners. In those rules he found one which said, that the paupers are to be at liberty to see their friends singly, and in the presence of the master of the house. Why, look at them in St. Pancras. There they had 1,150 poor people in their workhouse, and he would ask how it was possible that such a rule could be carried into operation—how could the master of the workhouse allow the whole of these 1,150 unfortunate persons to see their friends? Why, the proposition in itself was monstrous. (Hear, hear.) Now, then, with regard to the workhouse of St. Paul, Covent-garden. A poor man was allowed to go out to see his friends, and from some cause or other happened to be seven minutes behind his time. He was willing to admit that, for the sake of convenience and order, a little organization must be maintained, but at the same time there should be something like a reasonable limit thereto. Well, the poor man was seven minutes beyond his time, and what did this meeting imagine was the punishment to which that poor fellow was sentenced by the master of the workhouse—a punishment, let it be remembered, which was afterwards confirmed by the Board of Guardians? Why, he was ordered to be imprisoned in the house for the period of six months. ('Shame, shame!') A few days after a friend went up to the workhouse to see him, but on his arrival there he was told that he could not see him then, nor for the ensuing six months."—*Mr. Murphy, Freemasons' Tavern, Feb. 19, 1838.*

"He knew of no language sufficiently strong to characterize the atrocity of this disgraceful Bill. The Poor-Law Commissioners were now trying to introduce their infernal system into London, and, in order to disguise from the public the extent of its cruelty, they allowed the poor in the London workhouses eleven pints of beer per week, gave them leave to go out on Sundays, and forebore to insist on carrying into effect the disgraceful regulation for separating wedded couples. They made their regulations as palatable as they could, in order to blind the public;

but they might rest assured the public were not so easily gulled. They saw the fetters which were forging for them, and they would not quietly submit to have them put on. (Cheers.) It was intolerable that the patience of the public should be abused by a set of irresponsible Commissioners, possessing powers greater than those of any other tribunal in the country, powers of which Lord J. Russell himself seemed hardly to know the extent. He had on one occasion represented to Lord J. Russell the oppressive nature of that regulation which prevented the poor from leaving the workhouse on Sundays, and of other orders issued by the Commissioners, when his Lordship declared that he had never sanctioned them. The Poor-Law Commissioners were required by the Act to lay their regulations before the Secretary of State, for his approval, forty days before they were put in force, and Lord J. Russell denied ever having seen them. (Hear.) How then could the regulations of the Commissioners be binding, when they had begun by neglecting a legal obligation in not laying them before the Secretary of State? (Hear, hear.) The regulations of the Commissioners were most arbitrary and partial; for why should the paupers in the London workhouses be allowed eleven pints of beer per week, while those of the Bethnal-green workhouse, for instance, were restricted to cold water? It was the bounden duty of every man who regarded the rights of his fellow-citizens to use every exertion to get rid of this odious incubus of a Commission, and free the country from a tyranny that reduced its inhabitants to the level of serfs."—*Mr. Pearce, Freemasons' Tavern, Feb. 19, 1838.*

"They had invited delegates from the north, and other parts of the country, to attend meetings at which the people would no doubt assemble, through curiosity, to hear the harangues of Mr. Oastler, Mr. Stephens, and Mr. F. O'Connor. The result of all this was, that a meeting of delegates took place at Manchester, which he believed was not very numerously attended. The noble lord then read an extract from an article published on this occasion by the newspaper\* to which he had alluded, stating that the motion of the hon. member for Oldham for the repeal of the Poor-Law Act, was to be introduced on the 20th; that it would be strenuously supported by the South Lancashire Poor-Law Association, which had

been engaged for some months in spreading tracts to show the injustice of the Poor-Law Act; and that their efforts, they (the editors) were happy to say, had been generally attended with conviction to the minds of the people, that the law was repugnant to the first rights which they derived under the British constitution. He would not read to the House the language which had been used in support of the resolutions proposed at this meeting. The resolutions themselves, three in number, were to the effect, that the Act recently passed, called the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, had repealed all the wise and humane provisions of the 43d of Elizabeth, and had taken away the rate-payer's control over the funds, and the management of his own affairs; that under this new system the poor were subjected to a most tyrannical system, by confinement in large prisons, by separation of husband from wife, by difficulties thrown in the way of relief, and that its effects were to increase child murder, female suicide, and death by starvation. This was the statement made at the meeting of the delegates, collected after months of agitation on the part of the opponents of the Poor-Law Act,—these the consequences which they stated to have resulted from that Act. They sent up a petition to that House signed by many, no doubt, who sincerely believed that such really was the result of the law; and yet, when the question came under consideration the hon. and learned member,\* one of its chief opponents, proposed that it should now be put in abeyance. (Cheers.) He (Lord J. Russell) would say, that it was but just to the individuals who took this view of the subject to let them know whether the representatives of the people of the United Kingdom were prepared or not to sanction their description of a law now in operation, and by which the country was now governed. (Hear, hear.) If the House agreed in that description of the law, let it not lose a moment in repealing it. (Cheers.) If, on the contrary, the House was of opinion that it should still remain the law of the land, let it not deprive those by whom it was to be carried into operation of the moral force which was necessary for that purpose, by withholding its opinion. After the able speech of his noble friend, as to the general effect of the law, he would not now enter upon its details. It appeared to him, however, that notwithstanding all

\* *The Northern Star.*

\* D. W. Harvey.



the descriptions which had been given of the law, both for and against it, and although it contained many provisions, yet that it was far more simple in its principle than was generally understood or considered. The Poor-Law of Elizabeth decided that certain persons, infirm and impotent, should be relieved, and that able-bodied persons should be set to work. A subsequent law, the 9th George I., decided that certain persons who, it had decided, should receive relief, should be put upon the list, but that the parishes united together should have the power of making poor-houses, and employing them there, and that if they refused relief under such circumstances, they should be struck off the list. He said, then, that these two Acts of Elizabeth and George I., taken together, constituted the main body of the law under the present Act. The latter law was changed in 1796 by another law, departing from the principle of the former, but which he thought they had done very well to repeal in 1834. (Hear.) The main body of the present law to be carried into effect was therefore contained in these two Acts, and what they had done by the Poor-Law Amendment-Act was merely to say, that there should be a better means of carrying those Acts into operation. (Hear, hear.) That whereas the power of giving or refusing relief, the administration under vestries, the separating of parishes according to the decision of a single magistrate, had led to great and mischievous abuses, they thought it better that there should be unions of parishes, and representative Guardians for a number of parishes together, who would consult with more reference to the state of the neighbourhood, and be able to decide as to the cases of individuals with more reference to their general condition. He would say, moreover, that they had thought it better that there should be three Commissioners sitting in London, with the power to lay down rules for the guidance of those Guardians. Those Guardians, when cases arose where it might be necessary to afford relief, had the benefit of the views of the Board in London, who acted, not in opposition to, but in accordance and co-operation with, the country Boards. It appeared to him that the whole of this Poor-Law Amendment-Act contained little else than what he had stated, and that a great deal of what was said about the tyranny and cruelty of the rules to be carried into effect by the Commissioners, was not only

exceedingly exaggerated, but completely erroneous. One of these rules had been made use of on the hustings and elsewhere as a very popular and exciting topic—he meant the separation of the husband and wife in the workhouse. Now, in reference to that point, let him ask, was it a scheme first thought of in 1834? (Hear, hear.) In those very extracts, collected by the Commissioners of Inquiry before the Act passed, it was stated, that in the Liverpool workhouse the separation of husband and wife had already been effected. (Hear, hear.) There was another case which he was only told of in conversation, but which he nevertheless believed to be true, namely, that there was a parish in London, the Guardians of which had resisted the introduction of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. They went to the King's Bench, stated their case to the judges, who decided that they were free from the operation of that Act. They were asked whether the husband was separated from his wife in the workhouse, and they replied ‘certainly, that such had always been the case (cheers), and that they could not think of anything so improper as to admit them to remain together’ (hear); and yet, although that had been the case in every large and well-regulated workhouse throughout the country, an outcry was raised against the Commissioners for a total want of Christianity in having induced the House to pass an Act which was contrary to the law of nature and the laws of God.”—*Lord John Russell, House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

“We have made useful reforms; and, above all, we have carried reformation into a system, which you in Scotland are happily free from—a system mischievous in itself, and still more mischievously administered—I allude to the Poor-Laws. If Government had done nothing else in ten years, it would have deserved well of the country. If we have done little last session, I fear we shall do less in the next.”—*Lord Brougham at Inverness, 1834.*

NEW POOR-LAW PRAISE LAID ON WITH A TROWEL.—“The pecuniary result was not so satisfactory as another result of the system, which it was more difficult to get at, and which was this:—that it certainly tended to raise the character of the working classes in a degree which he believed no one in that House had expected.”—*Mr. Fox Maule, House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1841.*

“——— Grave and hoary hypocrites,  
Without a hope, a passion, or a love,  
Who, through a life of luxuries and lies,  
Have crept by flattery to the seats of power,  
Support the system whence their honours flow.”—QUEEN MAB.

“Lord John Russell in his speech in the House, March 19, 1841, said, ‘If under the Old Law (1) any acts of cruelty took place they were hidden and unknown, and now they were in the newspapers and made the attacks on Commissioners, or on the Government of the day, &c., &c.’ (2) ‘They should not leave it in the power of any person’s caprice to diminish or increase wages,’ &c., &c. (3) ‘It was obviously the interest of the labourer to say to the farmer—We are ready to work for fair wages; if you will not give them, we will go into the workhouse, and it will be for you to pay the expense. That was the course the labourer ought to take,’ &c., &c.; and he intimated they would do so, if not prevented by ‘mischievous demagogues,’ and then attempted to prove, that if properly carried out, it would tend to ‘raise the character and improve the condition of the English labourer.’ (4)

“These are the greatest insults to common sense that can possibly be. Now, with regard to the (1) old workhouses—they were always open to the rich and poor, and hardly a day passed without some poor persons within having some friend among rich or poor that would call and see them, and these hardly ever went without carrying them some little comforts or consolation of some kind. Now see the practice of the New Law:—

“A labourer, with a wife and seven children, were sent into a Bastile—and his brother walked ten miles, and ten back, making twenty miles, to see him, and carried an ounce of tobacco, and a few onions from his garden, to eat with his bread and cheese, and also a letter from his son, living nearly 100 miles from him. But the Governor would not let him see him at all; neither would he take the letter, or allow the porter to convey it into the House to the poor man.

“A young woman, whose husband had deserted her, with two children, was in another of these Bastiles, and her husband’s sister, and another young woman, thinking her cruelly treated, walked twenty miles, like the last mentioned,

with some little luxuries like the above: but they were not allowed admittance inside the walls. These parties were both informed afterwards, that *private and secret orders* had been given to keep them both very strict indeed to the rules and regulations, and not allow them to have any indulgences on any account whatever, and then they would soon be glad to go out again. Thus the poor are tormented until they are driven into the Houses, and then tortured until they are driven out again!

“One poor girl (16 years of age) went to see her grandfather, and the porter, not content with searching her pockets, &c., &c., for fear she might carry the old man any tobacco, *insisted upon putting his hand into her bosom*. The girl would not submit to this, and was sent back, poor thing! without seeing the old man, who was nearly 80 years old, at all! Yet the Guardians, the Governors, Matrons, Porters, &c., &c., will all shamefully swear through thick and thin, that no such things are practised—they never deny or refuse anything but ‘frivolous and vexatious’ cases, and such bad characters as are induced, through ‘mischievous demagogues,’ to annoy them, and give them trouble for nothing.

“(2) The labourer before-mentioned, could not stand the torture many weeks, before he must come out, and accept work at half price.

“(3) They are not allowed any such choice. If they refuse work (no matter at what price) the Boards all say, we have nothing to do with such cases, and the Relieving Officers are reprimanded for allowing such cases to come before them, and the applicant or applicants fiercely threatened with imprisonment for refusing work.

“(4) This a British Statesman declares is the way to ‘raise the character and improve the condition of the English labourer,’ when thousands of poor men are forced to live upon half bread and half potatoes, instead of bread, beef, pork, beer, and pudding, the good old English fare of the working men of England.



‘Raise the character and improve the condition,’ forsooth! when the standing orders (secret of course) to all the under-officials, is to take special care that the poor are not invited into the workhouse by having as much food, or as much comfort within, as they can obtain without.”—*Extract of a Letter from a Southern County Correspondent to the Author*, dated April 9, 1841.

“The worst feature of the Act, in his view, was the unlimited power which it placed in the hands of the Commissioners. He was persuaded that if every Board of Guardians in the country had resisted the decrees of that triumvirate with as much firmness and intrepidity as that of the parish of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, with which he was connected, the cruel and inhuman provisions of the statute would now have been virtually inoperative. That Board had never taken the slightest notice of the multitude of orders and regulations which the Commissioners accumulated on each other; and the Commissioners, at the end of every quarter, when they found that the Board disregarded their mandates, sent them a letter of indemnity. (‘Hear,’ and laughter.) At last, finding that the Guardians were not men who would cringe to a power unknown to the British constitution, they sent the Board a letter of revocation, and desisted from all attempts to influence its proceedings. (Hear, hear.) A deputation from the Board of which he was a member, had had several interviews with Lord J. Russell (groans), to represent the injurious working of the new system, and nothing could have been more heartless than the mean, shuffling conduct of the Minister. (Cheers, and cries of ‘Bravo!’) They took the liberty of stating to his lordship their utter surprise at the entire ignorance of the Government, which could intrust such monstrous powers to three irresponsible Commissioners. He (Mr. Gough) had also pointed out to the noble lord that there were certain properties at present in possession of the lay improprators of tithes to which the poor had an inalienable claim; on which his lordship said, ‘Don’t be personal, Sir.’ (Laughter.) He (Mr. Gough) thereupon told the noble lord that he did not come there to talk to Lord John Russell, but to her Majesty’s Secretary of State for the Home Department, and that he did not consider he was personal, since he came there on the public business. He did not see how it

was possible for any man who had a heart in his bosom, who had a particle of humanity in his disposition, or who revered the laws of his Creator, to defend the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, and he fervently hoped that the people would be speedily reinstated in their rights by the total repeal of the measure. (Cheers.)”—*Mr. Gough, Freemasons’ Tavern*, Feb. 19, 1838.

“The Poor-Law Commissioners propose to render workhouses the universal medium of relief; this is the *system* of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. Out-door relief is barely tolerated; it is a violation of the system, and an evil which the Commissioners never cease to deplore. The Commissioners, in their report on the continuance of the Poor-Law Commission, dated Dec. 31, 1839, say, the number of paupers ‘in the workhouses is 98,000; the number of paupers receiving out-door relief is above 580,000; to carry out the system, the 580,000 must be lodged in workhouses, or denied relief; for the distribution of relief in money, or goods, to be spent or consumed by the pauper, *in his own house*, is inconsistent with the principle that the condition of the pauper ought to be, on the whole, less eligible than that of an independent labourer.’ They have already prohibited out-door relief to the able-bodied in many Unions, and ‘propose to make the order *as general as possible*.’ Several of the abuses of the old system, they say, still continue to exist. ‘Relief in aid of wages (their phrase for out-door relief) is still given, in almost every Union, *to all paupers, except able-bodied males*; and it is given even to paupers of this latter class, in many Unions in which the workhouse arrangements are not completed. Relief is still given extensively to paupers resident out of their Unions. From a recent return, it appears, that in the quarter ending 25th of March, 1838, 94,852 persons were thus supported.’ That they may put an end to this abuse—out-door relief—is one of the reasons which they urge in favour of the continuance of the Poor-Law Commission. Two justices may order out-door relief for the aged and infirm who are wholly unable to work, where one of the justices is personally cognizant of the inability of the party; and from this the Commissioners infer that they were ‘expected to issue regulations, requiring the *aged* and infirm to receive relief only in the workhouse. They have recommended

this; but they say that they have, 'in very few instances, limited the discretion of the Guardians to giving out-door relief to this class of persons.'—*The Lancet*, April 10, 1841.

"In the heat of debate, Lord John Russell advanced a second-hand paradox, which his conscience and calmer judgment cannot fail to disclaim. He contended, that relief should be administered without any regard to the character of the poor. The destitute alone had a claim to relief; and all the destitute had an equal claim. That was the argument, which proceeded upon the assumptions that destitution is something absolute, and that any system of Poor-Laws can relieve all the destitution in the country. Now the degrees of destitution are infinite; and range from absolute privation through all the degrees of want and suffering which give rise to disease and death. The workhouse is no test of the degrees of destitution; the poor do not seek its gates at some given point of wretchedness; their willingness to enter its walls depends on innumerable circumstances in no way connected with destitution. Then the Poor-Law Commissioners will not contend for a moment that the poor-rates or charity can relieve all the real distress of the country. Some kind of discrimination must be used. They would restrict the relief to the paupers who are willing to enter the workhouses; they would refuse relief out of doors to the aged, infirm labourer, at the end of a life of toil, or to the industrious labourer, out of work, with a large family, and grant relief to the indolent, dishonest, drunken vagabond, who had no objection to an abode in the workhouse, and separation from his offspring. The revolting principle is unjust to the poor man and to the country; to the labourer, because he has a right to relief from society in some proportion to the amount of his contributions to its wealth, and to the country, because its industrious children are a part of its heritage, strength, and glory!"—*Ibid.*

"It was not the object of this Bill to do honour to female virtue; it was not its object, as had been assumed, to make women chaste and men continent; its primary intent was directed to other objects. But he was prepared to demonstrate, that if the Bill had been constructed with a view to protect female virtue, and not to amend the Poor-Laws—to make men more continent, and not to diminish

parochial burdens—it could not have been better framed for the accomplishment of these objects."—*Lord Brougham, House of Lords*, July 28, 1834.

"The great achievement of the Whigs since their accession to the Government, is the passing of the Act for the amendment of the English Poor-Laws. This is their true Reform Bill; and if the measure more distinctly so called, possesses any real value, it is chiefly as having paved the way for the passing of the other."—*Annual Register*, 1837.

"He should look with great jealousy at any one that went to impair the principle of what he looked upon as a most humane, and most benevolent law."—*Lord J. Russell, House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

"The continuance of the present Poor-Law was due to the community at large; but, above all, it was due to the working classes themselves; for without it, there could be no hope of improvement, either in their moral or their physical condition."—*Sir Robert Peel, Ibid.*

"It was impossible to feel more strongly than he did, that the agricultural districts owed a deep debt of gratitude to the Poor-Law Commissioners."—*Sir Harry Verney, House of Commons*, March 26, 1841.

"Whatever might be said of the law, the Commissioners were as deserving of public reward and of public admiration as any men who were ever charged with such high and important duties."—*Lord John Russell, Ibid.*

"I believe that there never was a measure passed through the British legislature of so much importance to the interests of this country as this Bill. I am aware there are many persons who hold a different opinion; but I firmly believe there never was a measure calculated to give so much prosperity to this country as that measure."—*Sir Robert Price, M. P. for Herefordshire—Agricultural Dinner*, Oct. 19, 1837.

"He eulogized the New Poor-Law as one of the most important measures passed since the accession of the Brunswick family to the throne of these realms."—*Mr. E. B. Clive, M. P. for Hereford, and Father of a Poor-Law Commissioner, at Ibid.*

"It is the policy of that small committee of men who really manage the Board, to sit out everybody but themselves; and then, when the room has been cleared of all but their own persons, they rapidly bring forward and determine upon the



most important matters ; so that it very often happens, that more extensive and important business is transacted in the last half-hour of a seven hours' sitting, than was done in the first six and a-half."—*The Rev. W. G. Cookeley's Letter to the Eton Guardians*, Jan., 1841.

"One object of attack on the Poor-Law Commissioners was, that they had not used their power of dealing summarily with those Union officers who might abuse the trusts in which they were placed, efficiently in many cases. He could only say, that whenever abuse had been brought to light, they had not failed in most instances to substantiate their case, and either to dismiss or punish the officer, or to show the public that he was not involved in the case brought before them. In the last year (1840) they had dismissed no fewer than 75 officers, besides accepting resignations from many others ; and in all instances no gentleman in that House could say that they had not shown the greatest readiness to make inquiry."—*Mr. Fox Maule, House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

A WHITE LIE.—"Mr. White, M. P. for Sunderland said, that having acted as a Chairman of the Sunderland Board of Guardians, his attention had been drawn to the working of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, and, as far as his experience and observation went, he must say that it had operated very beneficially to the poor, and that nine-tenths of the middle and lower classes in the north of England were in favour of the present system."—*House of Commons*, Jan. 29, 1841.

THE BEST OF MR. GRANTLEY BERKELEY'S WORKS OF FICTION.—"He believed that, though originally the Poor-Law was unpopular, it was now growing in esteem wherever it was properly administered."—*House of Commons*, Jan. 26, 1841.

MR. JAMES'S ROMANCE.—"In the county with which he was connected, the New Poor-Law had worked, and was still working, most beneficially, and the unpopularity with which it was at first attended had almost entirely disappeared."—*Mr. James, House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S CANDOUR.—"He should be deceiving the House if he were to hold out that there was any intention on the part of the Government to propose any considerable alteration or relaxation in the main principles of the

existing system."—*House of Commons*, Jan. 29, 1841.

"If you desire to witness the literal and effectual carrying into execution the rules and orders of the Commissioners, go to the Union of West Hampnett. You will there find that no labourer, having four children and upwards, can from his wages afford himself and family more than one meal of meat per week—that no able-bodied man receives assistance for himself or family, though since the New Poor-Law the price of labour has only advanced 10 per cent., while the price of flour has risen full 30 per cent.—that a widow being able-bodied, no matter how numerous her children, is not deemed an object for out-door consideration after the expiration of six weeks from the death of her husband—that old men are forced into the workhouse by the refusal of relief out of it, and there obliged to earn their subsistence within the confined and unhealthy oakum workshop—and that whether the Commissioners have or not the power of imprisoning in the workhouse, such right has been assumed and exercised by the Guardians, as appears by the following resolution in their minutes :—

"January 25, 1836. The governor of the workhouse having reported that Charles French, one of the paupers, had left the workhouse for several hours yesterday without permission, and had returned by scaling the walls,

"Resolved that he be placed in a room and confined for four days, and dieted on a pound and a-half of bread per diem, and water, and that he be employed during such four days in beating oakum."

—*Mr. Thomas Rodgers's Letter in the "Times,"* July 20, 1837.

"John Roads, a farm labourer, from Bromley, in Kent, applied to Alderman Humphrey for advice under the following circumstances. Seven years ago he married a young woman, who left him after living with him six months. She returned to him after being absent five months, but absconded again after stopping three months. He saw no more of her for two years, and then she returned far advanced in pregnancy. He refused to receive her, and she going to the parish, he was summoned before the Rev. Mr. Thomas Scott, of Bromley College, a magistrate for Kent, who committed him to hard labour in Maidstone gaol for neglecting to maintain his wife. He did not know till he reached Maidstone gaol what business he was committed upon. His reason for refusing to maintain her was not heard. The magistrate did not even see him. When he was released

he again refused to receive his wife and her bastard, and the Rev. Thomas Scott again sent him to Maidstone gaol for two months. After he was discharged, the same magistrate committed him a third time to Maidstone gaol for refusing to receive his wife. In July last a reconciliation took place between him and his wife, but now she had bolted again, taking some of his property, and he understood she was living with some man in London. He wanted advice. Mr. Alderman Humphery said he could not charge his wife with stealing the property, and he had better return home again. He was right in refusing to maintain his wife when she returned with unequivocal proofs of her adultery. His imprisonment at Maidstone was a gross abuse of power, for no man was bound to maintain an adulterous wife, and he was the more astonished that such power had been exerted to bring about an immoral end by a clergyman, whose superior knowledge of the moral duties and ties should have made such a committal particularly repugnant to him. Mr. Alderman Humphery advised him to return home."—*Times*, April 13, 1841.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

"Sir,—I beg to call public attention to the shameful conduct of the Guardians of Lambeth Union towards a poor woman named Elizabeth Buckhurst, who belongs to Lambeth parish, but resides in one of the almshouses belonging to the Cloth-workers' Company, at Sutton Valence, Kent.

"Now, this poor woman, although she lives rent free, and has £4 a-year and half-a-ton of coals from the company, is in a state of destitution, and from her great age (77) and infirmities, is scarcely able to hobble about the house, much less to do anything for herself, and is obliged to pay 6d. a-week or more for some person to look in and do trifles for her.

"As I was a sojourner at Sutton Valence a short time, I wrote a certificate for her to the Guardians of Lambeth Union, certifying that she was in a very infirm state of health, was unable to do for herself, and that she required more nourishment than she was able to procure,—of which they took not the least notice. I wrote a second; still no notice. And I then got the Guardians and respectable inhabitants of the parish she resides in to memorialize the Guardians of Lambeth Union to grant her out-door relief; and after a fortnight's consideration, their

gracious answer was—'That it was against their system to give out-door relief, but she might go into the house if she chose.' It would cost them, I presume, at least 2s. a-week to keep her in their 'Bastile;' but I suppose they calculated that their system in the said Bastile would be best adapted to kill her the quickest; as by allowing 2s. a-week out (which she had previous to the introduction of this infernal Whig Poor-Law) she might be able to get little comforts that would prolong her life, and put the parish to a few pounds more expense. Now, this poor woman must either starve or go to the Lambeth Union slaughter-house; and it is a very hard case that a person of her age should be compelled to leave a comfortable house, her friends, and the place of her nativity, for such a place. This New Poor-Law has the effect of producing madness, for a labourer belonging to Sutton Valence being out of employ, and not being able to procure any, or get relief, and from the thought of being obliged to go into one of these 'Bastiles,' and be separated from his wife and children,—these had such an effect upon his mind, as to produce madness; and, from the Kent Lunatic Asylum being filled with patients that have gone insane, I suppose from the same cause, he has been sent to the one at Bethnal-green. Have not two magistrates the power to order out-door relief to be given in Elizabeth Buckhurst's case?

"HENRY H. RUGG, Surgeon.  
"London, November 3, 1837."

"In the Commissioners' Reports the fathers of bastard children were spoken of as 'unfortunate' persons.' He was an unfortunate young man' who was brought before the justices for this offence; but whenever the mother was spoken of, allusion was certain to be made to her 'vice.' You did not meet with this form of expression in a solitary instance only: on the contrary, it pervaded the whole report. The language of the report was, 'the female is most to blame;'—'continued illicit intercourse originated with the female.' He confessed that he must require much better authority than any which he had seen in the report, to believe such an assertion."—*The Bishop of Exeter, House of Lords*, July 28, 1834.

"Private charity should be always made the handmaiden of the New Poor-Law, so as to meet those cases which it would not be possible to define by the law. It was said that the New Poor-Law



might be applicable to agricultural districts, but it was not applicable to large manufacturing communities. Now, in his opinion, it was even *more applicable* to the latter than to the former. There were so many fluctuations in the condition of the manufacturing classes, arising from such a variety of causes, that the New Law was particularly applicable to them. The manufacturing operative obtained more wages than the agricultural labourer, and the New Poor-Law was well adapted to teach him the propriety of laying up for, and making provision to meet, the fluctuations of business."—*Mr. Gally Knight, House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1841.*

"Experimental philosophers are proverbial for their indifference to the ordinary feelings of humanity. If any man doubts this, we recommend him to peruse the numerous interesting little publications which are annually put forth by the Society for Preventing Cruelty to Animals. Here he will find recorded how science, in the calm investigation of some curious theorem, thinks as little of dissecting dogs alive, galvanizing tame rabbits, or pouring melted lead down the throats of screaming fowls, as it does of looking at the moon through one of Dollond's telescopes. Unsophisticated readers, not thoroughly imbued with the principle of consulting the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number,' uninstructed in geological divinity, which teaches us that Omnipotence itself could not secure the general balance of good, except by a 'police of nature'—*i. e.*, of tribes impelled by an instinct of benevolence to eat each other—and not considering the intense satisfaction which the creature howling under the knife of the experimentalist would necessarily feel if it could only understand the importance of the principles which its sufferings may serve to illustrate—such readers, we say, are apt to feel a certain creeping sensation when they peruse the accounts of these things, a tingling of the blood in their veins, with a very unphilosophical disposition to feel ashamed, for the time being, of the species to which they belong. In proportion as the creature tormented rises in the scale of intelligence, this indignation increases; and no words are found sufficient for the condemnation of those who dare to make man the subject of their experiments. Most persons have heard of the French physician, who inoculated his Turkish patients with the plague to ascertain whether that

disease might so be communicated; and it would be easy to mention other cases, in which individuals have indulged a similar curiosity at the expense of their fellow-men, and, for so doing, have been visited with very general censure. But at length, in the present enlightened age, prejudice of every kind is fast disappearing; and while science marches on with a more fearless and unhesitating step, the foible humanity is almost brow-beaten out of the field.

"Experimental philosophy, as it formerly advanced in its researches from rabbits to men, has now advanced from men to nations; and, no longer contented with studying the fibres and arteries of animal bodies, has extended its researches to the finer mechanism and more subtle organization of those great moral interests which constitute political society. Laws of the most comprehensive nature, involving the happiness of millions, are passed by Parliament avowedly as experiments; philosophers are selected, from the newly-created department of science, to conduct the interesting process, with a *carte blanche* to vary the instruments, the mode, and the mechanism of investigation, as often and as widely as they think proper; and, instead of cats, horses, or dogs, the poor of Great Britain are made the subjects of their operations. To the mother who is forcibly separated from her sick or dying child (as in a recent case mentioned in the House of Commons by Mr. Wakley) the moral pain may perhaps transcend the agony of the dog whose brain was partially removed by the process of vivisection; and the prison diet of the workhouse may be to the widow as the scalding lead which a surgeon at Plymouth formerly introduced into the stomachs of 'several lively fowls.' But what signifies this, or any amount of individual suffering, when a great principle is to be established? If *Guardians* will but 'resolutely refuse relief out of the workhouse to widows with families,' the saving to the landed interest will be as vast as was the accession to science when the medical student used his knife unflinchingly, without regard to the lamentable moan, or the piteous eye, upon the rabbit or the cat. And in both cases it turns out, to the immense triumph and exultation of the scientific, that as the dog contrived to live on much longer than was expected without his brain, so the mother does not hang herself for the loss of her child—as the 'lively fowls' were actually seen to skip about dunghills and feed with an appetite for several days after they

were *leaded*, the widow thrives corporally upon her prison fare, till, by abandoning her claim to relief, she proves, to the satisfaction of the experimentalists, that she is in a condition to maintain herself.

"This may be called bantering, but we use the language of jest in bitter earnest. We ask those who hold the Poor-Law to be an experiment, and would continue it as such (Sir R. Peel is among the number), whether they doubt that to great numbers of harmless, inoffensive, deserving poor, it is a grievous and painful experiment—we should rather say, a system of experiments, most grievous and most painful? Is it not evident, that the Poor-Law Commissioners are engaged, not in administering a fixed and positive law, enacted deliberately and with a view to its perpetuity by the State, but in investigating, at the expense of the poor, a vast number of problems and theorems devised in the closets of speculative political philosophers, scarcely one of which would, *à priori*, and in the absence of experiment, recommend itself to a humane and considerate legislature? Assuming this to be undeniable, we ask again, whether Sir Robert Peel, and those who act with him, would act upon similar principles in any matters affecting the health or the mere *bodies* of mankind? Would they, for the sake even of making discoveries, however vast, in medicine, and reforming abuses, however serious, countenance the adoption of a wholesale system of experiments within our hospitals? Would they reckon it a small matter that the health of individuals should be wantonly destroyed—that some should be mutilated, and others poisoned or killed, by unsuccessful steps in the process of demonstration, so long as it proved successful on the whole? Above all, would they venture upon such a sacrifice of individuals, without a *positive certainty* beforehand that good would result to the community?

"To take a different test: the gentlemen to whom we appeal cannot be ignorant that there is a large school of politicians (and we suspect the Poor-Law Commissioners and their entire sect among the number), who consider the present system of *Corn-Laws* to be at least as capital and mischievous an abuse as the old system of Poor-Laws ever was. The arguments which they advance for their doctrine are infinitely stronger than any which could be brought forward against the old Poor-Law. At least, they say,

let the *experiment* be tried, let it be seen whether the interests of all may not be sufficiently protected by a modification of the present law. An entire repeal, they agree, would be most desirable, and most beneficial in the main, even if all the land-owners were to be sacrificed in the transition; but if the Legislature is not prepared for this, let us have (they repeat) the *experiment* on a smaller scale, and we will see how it works.

"Now, how do the landed gentry, who are so very ready to make painful experiments in the persons of the poor, answer this? They refuse flatly. Why? Because *this* experiment might be painful or dangerous, either directly or in its consequences, to themselves. In this case they see plainly enough the cruelty, the injustice, the robbery (as they consider it) of inflicting suffering upon the members of one class for the benefit of the rest—they see through the hollow pretence of those who would induce them to commit themselves to principles under the name of experiments, and they exclaim against the suicidal infatuation of legislating experimentally upon the most important interests of the nation. The numerical proportion of these gentlemen who might suffer by a Corn-Law experiment, to those who *do* suffer by the present Poor-Law experiment, is as that of units to thousands; and a poor man has quite as great a capacity of suffering as any baronet or duke. Oh! that we could either see ourselves as others see us, or look upon others with as much tenderness as we discover for ourselves!"—*Times*, April 14, 1841.

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"The Chairman of the Ludlow Board of Guardians, Charles Walker, Esq., at a meeting held on the 29th ult., refused to allow the subject of considering the propriety of petitioning Parliament to reduce the number of Assistant-Commissioners to be discussed, he considering the Board incompetent to entertain any such question."—*Hereford County Press*, May 16, 1840.

"The Poor-Law Commissioners have declined to accede to a resolution of the Bath Board of Guardians, for the admission of reporters to their meetings."—*Ibid.*, Dec. 29, 1838.

"In the Queen's Bench, last week, the judges decided that no Board of Guardians had any power to appoint Assistant-Overseers or Collectors of Rates."—*Ibid.*, June 22, 1839.



“Sir Robert Peel said, his opinion was, that paupers should not be exposed to the painful feelings consequent upon seeing burial-grounds attached to, or connected with, the workhouses. If paupers decidedly preferred being buried in the consecrated ground attached to their parish churches—if they wished that their bodies should be gathered to those of their ancestors—such wishes ought to be treated with due consideration. They had a right to decent interment; they were entitled to expect that they should be allowed to rejoin in death those whom they had loved through life.—Mr. T. S. DUNCOMBE said, the right hon. baronet had spoken very pathetically of the feelings of old people, on the subject of being buried in the church-yard; he wished that hon. members would have a *little more* feeling for the old people whilst they were living.”—*House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

LORD HOWICK'S COMMISSIONERS FOR EVER AND EVER!—“He for one did not see any time that the Act could cease.....He for one should have no objection to continue the Commissioners *indefinitely*; because it appeared to him that there were many of the objects which these Commissioners were intended to answer, which it was impossible to suppose could be ever at an end.—Mr. W. ATTWOOD said the noble lord, the member for Northumberland, the unmitigated supporter of the Bill, would have an indefinite prolongation of their powers. He wanted a sort of hereditary Pashalik to be conferred on the Commissioners.”—*House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

“The Guardians of the Boston Union, at a Board held on Saturday last, ordered the *Penny Magazine*, *Saturday Magazine*, and *Chambers's Journal*, to be taken in regularly for the use of the paupers in the Union workhouse.”—*Lincoln Gazette*, Feb., 1841.

HUME'S HISTORY REVIEWED.—“At a meeting held within these few days at Marylebone, for the purpose of alleviating the condition of the poor, Mr. Hume,—though liberally subscribing to the fund of benevolence,—could not omit the opportunity of lauding the provisions of the Poor Act, holding it up to the admiration of the Marylebone meeting, as a measure all-sufficient to meet the exigencies of the case. ‘By the Poor-Law Act,’ contended the hon. gentleman, ‘every man had the assurance of immediate and full relief.’ Yet, somehow, the eccentric and refractory poor die, perish of starvation, with the

blessings of the Poor-Law showered like manna upon them. Does Mr. Hume—save when his own speeches are reported, read those vulgar, daily histories of the world, the newspapers? If so, what does he think of those little tragic episodes—coroners' inquests? Can poverty be so refractory as to perish with famine, and only to give a *bad name* to the New Poor-Law? Is it possible that men die purely out of spite to the people of Somerset-house? Must there not be something vitally wrong, wickedly unjust, in an enactment that, ostensibly framed to succour the poor, becomes to them a terror and a scourge? Mr. Hume, however, subscribed £5 for the poor of Marylebone; and hence gave the strongest evidence against the sufficiency of the New Poor-Law.”—*Morning Herald*, Jan. 19, 1841.

“As it was thus necessary to establish a central control, it was plain that the individuals who were to exercise this control ought to be persons, *not members of either house of Parliament, not selected for party purposes, and wholly unconnected with the parties that arose in the state*. To him it was further manifest that the contemplated reform could be effected only by investing the Commissioners thus to be appointed with large discretionary powers, nay, he would say, with arbitrary powers.....He was aware that these powers might be unconstitutional.”—*Lord Brougham, House of Lords*, July 21, 1834.

“He admitted that the censure passed on the female chastity of the lower orders, by one of the Assistant-Commissioners, was very strongly worded; but that gentleman had a style of warmth and precipitancy which often led him to form conclusions stronger than his premises warranted. Moreover, the evidence given before the Commissioners went a long way to confirm the correctness of the opinion given by the sub-Commissioner referred to.”—*The Bishop of London, House of Lords*, July 28, 1834.

Under the proposed alterations of the law (the bastardy) there might arise cases of individual hardship; but, on the whole, he conscientiously believed that it would be of unspeakable benefit to the community.”—*Ibid.*

“Lord Althorp protested against these provisions (of the Bastardy Clause) being discussed as matters of feeling; they must be looked at as they affected, not one portion of society, but the whole of

it; and looking at the question in this point of view, he was prepared to support this part of the Bill, 'as a boon to the female population.'"—*House of Commons*, April, 1834.

THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS DEFENDED AS THEY NEVER WERE BEFORE, AND NEVER WILL BE AGAIN—EXCEPT HIS PRESENT BRITANNIC MAJESTY, KING SATAN, SHOULD UNDERTAKE TO BUTTER THEM PREPARATORY TO HIS FRYING THEM HEREAFTER.—“I trust I shall be able to confute the statements of the more virulent and unreflecting opponents of the New Poor-Law Act, and to justify Boards of Guardians, the Magistracy, Clergy, and Nobility of these realms (who have been harmoniously (!) united in their several localities in carrying out the provisions of it) from the coarse and brutal attacks which have been levelled at them by some portions of the public press. The Poor-Law Commissioners may safely be trusted to defend their own regulations; but I cannot help saying, that however we may differ upon minor points, as to the proper number of Commissioners for instance, the amount of their salaries, or the duration of their office, *never were public functionaries, who have done so much and so well for the country, so unfairly treated as those gentlemen (! !)* The Act, in order to cure enormous abuses, gives them very great powers, and their operations as a Board affect more or less the tenable value of every house and acre in the kingdom; the whole mass of the population, rate-payers, or rate-receivers, are subject to their regulations in all cases connected with pauper-parochial expenditure; and when you bear in mind that the annual amount of it once exceeded £8,000,000 (?) divided amongst more than 2,000,000 paupers, some idea may be formed of the immensity of their labours and the extent of their responsibility. But that you may have accurate data upon which to ground your opinion touching the duties and remuneration of these libelled (!) stipendiaries, take the following account of their stewardship, since the administration of the law was confided to them in August, 1834. The average annual expenditure for the relief of the poor in England and Wales, for the five years, 1830, 31, 32, 33, 34, was £6,754,590; for 1835, 36, 37, 38, 39, £4,567,988. Average annual saving, £2,186,602 (! !). The total saving in the expenditure for the relief of the poor since 1834, as compared with the expenditure

in the five years preceding is £10,933,013. Now the total cost of the Commission from August, 1834, to Lady-day, 1839, was £182,679. Again, the annual expense for Poor-Law litigation for each of the two years immediately preceding the introduction of the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act, was £256,508, whilst the average expense of Poor-Law litigation for each of the five years, ending March, 1839, was £132,080. The saving under this head in the latter five years may therefore be estimated at £622,138, which is more than three times the expense of the Poor-Law Commission during the same period. The annual expenditure for the relief of the poor for the year ending March 25th, 1839, was £4,427,549, the interest of this at five per cent. would be £221,620; now what gentleman's landed estate is agented at a less rate than five per cent. per annum, and yet if you look at the whole expense of the Commission for the year above referred to (1839), the total amount for England and Wales is only £50,000; so that the charge for agency or supervision is less than one per cent. But this is not all: the Poor-Law Commissioners, in addition to their proper functions, have saved the country a heavy expenditure (! !) by their cheerful acquiescence in undertaking additional labours (without fee or reward), which the legislature has imposed upon them. Their own Central Board, as a supervisory court, and the efficient local bodies established by them as Guardians of the Unions of these kingdoms, have enabled the Government, with little or no extra cost, to carry on the parochial assessments, the Workhouse Building Act, to obtain valuable subsidiary information relative to the tithe commutations, to give efficiency to the efforts of the magistracy and local police in suppressing vagrancy and mendicity, to fulfil the provisions of the Registration Act, which is chiefly worked by Clerks of Unions as superintendents, and by Relieving Officers as district registrars, and to provide the safeguard of prompt and efficient vaccination, successfully performed and duly attested for all the subjects of these kingdoms. Had a very useful measure, introduced into Parliament last year, been carried out for an improved and economical management of our highways, the Board in London, as a centre, and the Guardians of Unions in the country, as waywardens, presented a ready and effectual machinery for a development of it, without any fresh cost to



the country. These, then, are the individuals who have done more work for the nation than any other public servants, who have, nevertheless been maligned, traduced, insulted, nay *assaulted*, for the faithful discharge of their duties; duties which I firmly believe have had a greater effect in re-uniting the dislocated bonds of society in this country, than any other efforts of a public or private nature during the last two hundred years (!!) I have now given you a slight sketch of their labours, and of the compensation given, and you will have perceived that they are paid less in proportion than any other officers of the state. Undoubtedly in some Unions their services might be now gratefully acknowledged, and in future dispensed with, *as Commissioners*; but, as auditors of accounts, and general superintendents, we shall still be glad of them as auxiliaries; the rather because whilst we should be spared the local tax which we now pay for auditors, the Assistant-Commissioners are remunerated from the Consolidated Fund." — *The "Practical Working of the Poor-Laws in Herefordshire," by the Rev. J. Hanmer Underwood, Chairman of the Ledbury Board. Being Observations delivered by him to the Guardians, March 16, 1841, and published by desire (to obtain a fat Ministerial living) April 17.*

A GRUNT AT THE GILBERT UNIONS. — "22 Geo. III., c. 83, is one of the most important Poor-Law Acts ever passed, whether you view it in reference to the labourer, the interests of rate-payers, or to the present discussions upon the power of dissolving or retaining the incorporations established under it. It is commonly called the 'Gilbert Act,' and is vicious in principle (!!) as well as arbitrary and unconstitutional (!!) in practice. Guardians and Directors may be appointed by it, and if three-fourths of them agree to it, their workhouse may be built *out of their Union*. Section 30 encourages the separation of families, permitting parents to send their children to the workhouse. Clause 33 lays on Guardians the onus of finding work for the able-bodied labourer.....Although the 22nd of Geo. III., c. 83 (commonly called the 'Gilbert Act') permits three-fourths of the Guardians of any Gilbert incorporation to build their workhouses *in parishes not comprised in their Unions* (to the great distress of relatives of inmates, who may be unable to make long journeys to visit them), the present law

*humanely (!)* rejects such a provision, and at the same time repudiates the monstrous principle so prominent in the Gilbert Act, which not only allows but *requires* Guardians to find work for the able-bodied out of the workhouse, on conditions alike destructive of the welfare of the labourer, and the interests of the rate-payer. But these Unions are not only mischievous in themselves, they have also a bad effect in co-terminate parishes, preventing them being formed into proper districts under our own Act. The resistance of the Gilbert Guardians to a dissolution of their incorporations, would be altogether unintelligible, if we did not know (I quote from the Commissioners' Reports) 'that they receive payment varying from £5 to £10, and even £20 per annum, for attending at *monthly meetings* only,' whereas our Guardians meet weekly, and that gratuitously (?) 'At a meeting of the Oswestry Gilbert Union, when the Directors refused to dissolve, a butcher was in the chair, who was himself supplying the workhouse with meat!' The Montgomery Guardians maintain their incorporation 'in direct opposition to evidence which showed that their expenditure was *fifty per cent. higher* than was necessary.' But, besides their monthly pay, these Guardians, by the 33d section of their Act, are ordered, at the expense of their respective parishes, to supply their poor with clothing, on their own terms. And yet the encouragement held out to them for enrolling themselves under the rules of the Commissioners is very great (!!!). In the year 1835, seventeen Gilbert incorporations consented to be extinguished. Under their own rules, their expenditure amounted in a year to £114,152: under the Poor-Law Act to £67,039, giving a saving of forty-one per cent., £47,113." — *Ibid.* (Doesn't he deserve a living?)

"We, the Guardians of the Ledbury Union, are a corporation appointed to administer in this place a law, *whose provisions cannot be honestly carried out unless we conform to the 'Rules and Regulations of the Commissioners.'* If we oppose systematically those rules, we may, indeed, obtain the unenviable celebrity of being lauded to the skies by extreme Tories and violent Chartistes, as, par excellence, 'friends of the poor,' 'foes of the three dictators,' &c., &c. If the majority of the Guardians were remiss in their attendance (which I am thankful in being able to say has never been the case)

the comments of the press would be a 'junta,' or a 'knot,' or 'a miserable minority of the Board,' attend and carry on the business at their own arbitrary discretion, 'trample on the rights of the poor,' and so on; whilst the magistracy, clergy, and more humane friends of the lower orders, retire in disgust, or refuse to be participators in such atrocious inhumanities.' But no more striking proof of the general success of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act can be adduced, *than the great infrequency of petitions to Parliament for any departure from the principles of the Bill, by Boards of Guardians (! ! !)*. This is a very important feature in the question, when you are told that the parishes in England and Wales are, in round numbers, 14,500, with a population of 14,000,000. Of these, 790 parishes, and 2,000,000 souls, remain under local or Gilbert Acts, whilst the remaining 12,000,000 in 13,800 parishes are under the control of the new statute. Are, then, Boards of Guardians fair representatives of the interests of the upper and lower classes in their several districts? Let us look at the constitution of Boards of Guardians, and take if you will our own as a sample. It is composed of 24 ex-officio, and 27 elected Guardians, amongst whom are seven clergymen, two solicitors; gentlemen of rank and station, others farming their own estates, occupiers of large farms, thriving tradesmen, rack-renters of smaller properties; and I do not forget that the ex-officio members attend here in *greater* numbers than in any other Unions that I am acquainted with. Let me mention, incidentally also, to show how cordially the elected and non-elected Guardians are united in carrying out the provisions of this Act, that no instance has occurred in the county (to my knowledge) of any magisterial interference (under the 27th and 54th clauses) with the decision of the Guardians: in this district, where the justices are nearly as numerous as the elected members of the Board, I am sure it has not been the case. Not that I deem the constitution of our Board so faultless, as to be altogether unsusceptible of any improvement, for there are *two classes* not sufficiently, if *at all*, represented in it, and these are the very *small rate-payer*, occupying from one to fifteen acres, and the *independent* labourer who maintains (with decent frugality) (! !) himself, wife, and five children, on the average weekly wages of the county. I wish a few from

these classes were paid for their attendance here on our days of meeting, and that their opinions were asked on the *relief* (if any) and the *quantity* and *quality* of it which they would allot to the pauper applicants of their respective parishes. You must not, however, permit them to sit on your House Committees, lest they should discover that, while they contentedly maintain their own children at the cost of one shilling and sixpence per head per week, on a dietary, in which the potato is the principal ingredient, the profligate women with their illegitimate offspring, and the reduced drunkards living in the House, are faring on a commissariat whose cost is three shillings per head per week, and in which are fresh meat and soup (each twice a-week) alternate with a white loaf of best seconds flour, good cheese, and good oatmeal. It may be urged that this anomaly supplies an argument to show the insufficiency of the Central Board; but let us be just, let us bear in mind the popular clamour which has been raised against it, and the comparison between gaol and workhouse fare, so generally and so untruly paraded in the columns of our journals. No, I am so far from indulging the unreasonable expectation, that abuses of three hundred years' standing can be cured in seven, by a *handful* of Commissioners, that I am very sure it will require all the care of the present officials, and perhaps of supplemental ones, as auditors, workhouse visitors, and ambulatory inspectors, to ensure a consistent and uniform national workhouse economy. The diet of the able-bodied and of children in workhouses, must be brought down to the average weekly cost per head of the hard working labourers' family meals; and the aged and sick must have a different time for theirs, either an hour before or after the general 'mass of the inmates.' Let me hope that the learned Commissioner, whom I am happy to see here, will give his best consideration to these suggestions."—*Ibid.* (He must have the living !)

A BLESSED BOUNCER.—"In Bedfordshire, Berkshire, and Sussex, under the old Poor-Law, it is upon record, that the rule of right had become so completely inversed, by the dislocation of interests, that the pauperized labourer had actually swallowed up both landlord and tenant (! ! !). I repeat it, that in more than one parish the landlord *offered his estate to his tenant rent free, and that it was refused*



on account of the enormous amount of poor's-rate to be paid (! ! !)"—*Ibid.*

A COMMISSIONER'S PATTERN CHAIRMAN.—"Some of you (the Guardians) are aware that, so far back as the October of 1839, I was anxious to be relieved from the duties you had assigned me; and that I consented to act in compliance with the wishes of valued friends, who feared that high prices and a hard winter, preceded by an autumn in which we had failures of our staple productions (hops and cider) might induce an infringement of some of the Commissioners' rules, unless carefully watched by some one who had gathered experience in Poor-Law administration (! ! !). The same recurring causes, in a partial degree, induced a similar wish on your part, and acquiescence on mine, last winter. The time, however, has now arrived when, without any imputation of abandoning my post at a season of difficulty, I may be permitted respectfully to vacate the chair, in the hope that your just expectations may be realized by some gentleman of property and station in the neighbourhood, succeeding to its duties. To yourselves my best thanks are due, as well as to the officers of the Union, who have all in their several stations faithfully and diligently discharged the functions assigned to them. You and they may reflect with just satisfaction on the success which has attended your united exertions; for you have proved that the strictest compliance with the spirit of the law, and the Commissioners' regulations, is entirely consistent with kindness to the deserving poor, and retrenchment of parochial expenses. Your estates are improved ten per cent., your tenants are more prosperous, and your labourers have better wages (?)."—*Retiring Address of the Chairman of the Ledbury Board (the Rev. J. H. Underwood) to the Guardians*, March 16, 1841.

"There are many other topics which I must endeavour to condense by quoting from the tabular returns of the Poor-Law Commissioners, the results of this great national experiment. The evidence given before the Committee of the House of Commons, particularly in questions and replies numbered '11,391' to '13,329,' will best attest the sentiments of credible and *unimpeachable* witnesses from all parts of the kingdom. Refer only to the answers to Mr. Tidd Pratt, under whose supervision every farthing of the Savings' Bank and Friendly Societies' Deposits is paid into the Bank of England, and then

say whether or not the New Poor-Law has failed in one of its principal objects, viz., the creation of *provident habits* amongst the lower orders. Surely the bare fact that the increase of depositors in the Savings' Banks of these realms, from Nov., 1837 to Nov., 1838, amounted to £50,000, and increased deposits to £1,890,000 (wheat averaging nine shillings per bushel) is enough to convince any one, who now hears me, of the soundness of these conclusions. There is, indeed, a short way of excluding all evidence on the operation of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, by affirming that the 'Annual Reports are forgeries,' and the authors of them persons who can only be described by a short word of a very unparliamentary character. It was upon some such sweeping principle as this that a gallant and eccentric senator, speaking of the disappointment experienced by a friend of his at the non-performance of political promises, quoted that friend's observation to the effect, that 'King David in his haste had said all men were liars, but that he did so advisedly and deliberately.'"—*Ibid.*

THE CIRENCESTER GUARDIANS OUT-DONE!—"For ourselves, gentlemen, I am quite sure we shall reject any left-handed compliments, to the effect 'that our affairs have been successfully managed in defiance of the Commissioners' rules,' or that 'our humanity (the Ledbury Guardians' humanity ! ! !) has intercepted or mitigated the severity of their orders.' For how stands the fact? I find in the Commissioners' Report for 1840, that the Ledbury and Bromyard Unions have been distinguished for a strict adherence to the 'mandates of the triumvirate,' in refusing relief to able-bodied men out of the workhouse. Take this also into consideration, that during the autumns of 1838 and 1839, wheat averaged 9s. 6d. per bushel, and neither fruit nor hop-picking afforded the wives and children of the labourers any opportunity of adding to the household store. Notwithstanding, however, this heavy pressure in a hop and cider country, for the quarter ending March, 1839, *only two able-bodied men entered the Bromyard and Ledbury workhouses*. The former Union has always been well managed, and you know the characters of the Chairman and Vice-chairman so well, that it is superfluous for me to add, that *humanity (! ! !)* is a prominent feature there in the administration of the law. For ourselves, let us not shrink from

avowing that we had, by anticipation, adopted all the *more stringent* rules of the Commissioners a-year-and-a-half before they were made binding upon us. From the day this workhouse was finished, we made a by-law prohibiting out-door relief to any able-bodied man; and with respect to the Bastardy clauses, we acted upon the principle that an immoral woman should not be allowed to affiliate illegitimate children *at all*, and so be placed on a better footing than widows maintaining children without parochial aid."—*Ibid.*

SCANDAL ABOUT ELIZABETH. — "After this (the 18th of Eliz.) came the great battle-horse statute, the 43d of Elizabeth, c. 2, which the present impugners of the Poor-Law Act have called the 'Charter of the Poor,' and to the operation of which they would again *commit* the labouring population. The first clause of this Act directs Overseers to set to work the children of those whom the parish officers shall deem to be unable to maintain their own children; to buy flax, hemp, iron, &c., &c., in order to set people to work, and to levy money for the relief of the old, impotent, and infirm; where it is observable that *work* is provided for the young and able, *money* for the *aged, blind, sick, and infirm*. Clause 3, If justices see that the inhabitants of a parish are not able to raise enough money to maintain their own poor, the said justices shall order a levy to be made on any neighbouring parish in the hundred to make up the deficiency!!! Clause 5 enables overseers to apprentice out boys *until they are twenty-four, and girls until they are twenty-one years of age*; it also enables the parish officers, with permission of the lords of the manors, to build houses for the poor on commons or waste lands, and to place more families than one in a house."—*Ibid.*

THE LIE DIRECT.—"The 71st sect. of the New Poor-Law extinguishes the provisions of the old statutes, which fixed the settlement of the bastard in the parish where it was born; and by constituting the mother's settlement the settlement of the child, has effectually taken away the motive to commit the atrocities so frequently practised, when parish officers carted wretched women, on the very verge of childbed, from one parish to another, lest their hapless infants should gain a settlement by being born within their confines. Nor will the New Act tolerate the rigorous spirit of 7th of James I. and 50th of George III., which punished

*immorality* as though it had been *felony*, but has taken away the penalty of imprisonment formerly applicable to the father or mother of the bastard. Nevertheless profligates, if not punished as convicted felons, are not suffered to bring burdens upon parishes, without some check and discouragement; the father may be compelled to reimburse the parish, and the mother is no longer permitted to hold a better situation than the well-conducted widow who maintains one child without parochial aid, but must enter the workhouse and labour for the support of her offspring. On these clauses, however, I will no longer detain you, but will only state respecting them, that countless reports are received attesting their efficacy in checking profligacy, as well as reducing parochial taxation—"The number of bastards affiliated in the year, ending Lady-day, 1835, was 12,381; the number affiliated in 1837, was 4,408. The number of bastards chargeable in the year ending Lady-day, 1835, was 71,298; in 1837, 45,135; whilst, therefore, the number of affiliations has decreased sixty-four per cent., the burden on the parishes (so far from increasing from the fathers' not paying) has decreased at the same time thirty-seven per cent."—*Ibid.*

THE HERO OF WATERLOO. — "He maintained it was impossible for Parliament to frame any law that could by possibility remedy the abuses which prevailed at the present moment—abuses which were as varied in their character as they were numerous. Hence, it became absolutely necessary that a Central Board of Commissioners should be appointed, with powers to control the whole of the parishes in the land, and to adopt such remedies as would procure a same administration of the Poor-Laws throughout the country. The subject had been under the consideration of every Administration that he had known; but no plan had ever been suggested or scheme proposed to remove and remedy the evils of the existing laws, which in his judgment at all equalled the present. The Bill before the House was unquestionably the best that had ever been devised."—*Duke of Wellington, House of Lords, July 21, 1834.*

#### MR. JAMES ACLAND.

"A little while before going to press, we received a communication that this worthy is about to figure in Rochdale Theatre, on Monday evening, in the character of a Lecturer on Poor-Laws,



and Defender of the New Poor-Law. He seems also to be mad enough to think that the good folk of Rochdale will give him a shilling a-piece for telling them that the New Poor-Law is 'a measure of impartial justice, benevolence, and policy.' We suppose the smell of the 'foot-lights' must have brought up in Mr. Acland's memory the recollection of '*the days of lang syne*,' for we perceive that, with a laudable attention to theatrical propriety, his flaming 'bills of the day' regard, with scrupulous exactness, the varying grades of his expected audience—'Boxes, one shilling; Pit, sixpence; Gallery, three-pence.' The entertainments are also to be varied, consisting of a new Burletta, in the shape of a Lecture on Poor-Laws; after which will be presented the admired farce of 'A Discussion on the Merits and Demerits of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act.' 'Tis strange how a few years' want of practice causes some men to forget the technicalities and usages of their respective professions! How is it that, in this announcement of Mr. Acland's performance, we do not find the usual 'half-price at nine o'clock exactly.' Perhaps he estimates the Farce as the most valuable part of the evening's performance, and we should not be surprised if it turn out to be so. But why do we, who upon all occasions court discussion on the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act, and who have visited every principal town in Yorkshire at our own cost for the purpose of publicly denouncing it, and challenging its friends to offer any defence for it, denominate this called-for discussion of Mr. Acland's, a farce? Simply for this reason,—that Mr. Acland takes the precaution by fixing a high rate of charge for admission, to keep out the greater part of those who, though most interested in the discussion, are not likely to espouse his side of the argument. We give Mr. Acland credit for being shrewd enough to perceive this, and to perceive also that in the small town of Rochdale it is highly probable no friend of 'impartial justice' may be found, having moral courage enough to undertake a discussion on such a subject before a lob-sided audience, especially when the tricks of Huddersfield, Preston, and other places, standing before our eyes, convince us that the Devil sticks at no means for the accomplishment of his ends. Besides, independent of all this, Mr. Acland knows full well that the people have no notion of allowing an avowed supporter of this infernal law to

laugh at their folly, in filling his empty pockets, for the satisfaction of ascertaining that his head is as devoid of all useful furniture as his purse. If Mr. Acland really wishes for discussion, let him come from behind his shilling wall of entrenchment,—let him stand fairly and honestly before us,—and we have no doubt that Rochdale contains a score of working men fully capable of affording him ample demonstration of how poor a stand practised sophistry can make against simple truth in its most artless guise. Characteristic of 'humbug' as this affected called-for discussion is, we venture to predict, that there are, at least, two towns in which Mr. Acland will not repeat it—HULL and BRISTOL. By-the-by, talking of Hull and Bristol, we should like to know whether this James Acland, late Editor of the *North Cheshire Reformer*, is the same James Acland who formerly edited the *Bristolian* in Bristol, and afterwards the *Portfolio* in Hull,—who was chosen churchwarden at Hull, and, after a vigorous opposition, had his election sustained so determinately, that the authorities were literally compelled to acknowledge its legality, and who afterwards acknowledged his obligation to the people by absconding with the parish funds—whose memory is also holden in tolerably vivid recollection by a number of individuals in both those towns, to whom he has proved himself an exceedingly dear friend. We are exceedingly desirous for information on this subject, because if this James Acland and that James Acland happen to be both one James Acland, then we must indeed say that the three kings have chosen unto themselves a most worthy champion; between whose character and that of the iniquitous law, the public detestation of which he seeks to turn to profitable account, there is an amazing similitude in villany. If it be not the same James Acland, then Mr. Acland owes it both to himself and to the great public measure which he has undertaken to defend, instantly and publicly to dis sever himself and it from all possible association with so vile a character. We wait therefore for his disclaimer, and shall be guided thereby as to some *leetle* disclosures which may or may not be made. Of James Acland, late editor of the *North Cheshire Reformer*, we know but little; of James Acland, of Hull and Bristol notoriety, we know more than we should like to be compelled to tell."—*Northern Star*, April 21, 1838.

“THE PAID POOR-LAW AGITATOR AGAIN.

“On Tuesday week, this worthy again made his appearance at Preston, and issued placards announcing that he was going to resume the discussion on the New Poor-Law, on Thursday evening, at the theatre. At the appointed time he made his appearance, and commenced by noticing the various placards which had appeared on the walls. He indulged for about an hour, no doubt much to the *enlightenment* of his *numerous* auditory, in the most violent personal abuse against some of our townsmen, after which he *attempted* to discuss the Bastardy Clause, but such a futile attempt was never heard before, together with such coarseness of expression, that the hearers were quite disgusted with him as the following evening proved.

On Friday evening, he again, at eight o'clock, *did* make his appearance; but, oh! alas! alas! how chop-fallen was our hero when he looked around upon the *empty benches*. At a quarter-past eight o'clock, about *half-a-dozen* had made their appearance in a place that would accommodate about 2,000; but at nine o'clock, (after some friend had sent the bellman round with the following announcement—‘Lost, *Mr. Acland’s audience*, who so *loudly cheered* him last evening,—whoever will bring the same to the theatre immediately, shall be handsomely rewarded,’) the state of the house stood thus: Boxes, 13! Pit, 11! Gallery, 10!! So much for the SUCCESS of this adventurer.”—*Northern Star*, June 2, 1838.

“MR. ACLAND AT HUDDERSFIELD.

“On Monday last, the notorious James Acland, of Hull, Bristol, and Liverpool, &c., &c., notoriety, lectured in our Philosophical Hall, on the New Poor-Law, but at the expense of his party. By the rules of the society, it is provided that the Hall shall not be let to any person for political lectures without security being given by two bondsmen, householders of the town, for any damage that may be done; accordingly, fifteen of the committee met on Friday, and agreed, by a majority of thirteen to two, that the rule should be abided by; Wm. Moore, the postmaster, and the notorious John Tempest, were the two who were for Acland having the Hall contrary to rule; they said, why put the man about to find security, when, if the reptile mob dared to break the windows, the county would have them to pay for.

On Monday, these two worthies again got the committee together, and succeeded in packing it so as to get a majority of eleven to three for Acland, to have the Hall without finding security. On the Friday, a proposition had been made to Mr. Acland, on behalf of the Anti-Poor-Law Association, by Messrs. James Brooke and Mark Crabtree, to discuss with Mr. Acland the advantages and disadvantages connected with the New Poor-Law, provided Mr. Acland would agree that the proceeds of the discussion, after paying expenses, and allowing a fair remuneration for Mr. Acland’s time and trouble, should be devoted to such charitable uses as a majority of the audience, present at the discussion, might agree upon. To this proposition Mr. Acland decidedly objected. He would allow no one ‘to interfere with the question of profit and loss.’ He conceived his family to have stronger claims than the charities of Huddersfield upon any profit which might arise—and he thought it unreasonable that they should wish him to adopt a course of proceeding which would soon oblige him to become an inmate of a workhouse. This inference was certainly not justifiable after the proviso made by the Association, that a fair remuneration of his time and trouble should take precedence of any charities, in the distribution of the proceeds. So at least we think, and so it seems thought the public, for in the evening a meeting was held in the open air close to the Hall, when from eight thousand to ten thousand people assembled, and the following resolutions were unanimously passed:—

“1. That James Acland, having refused the fair and honourable terms proposed by the Anti-Poor-Law Association to meet him in discussion, has proved that he is unworthy of the notice of all benevolent men.

“2. That James Acland’s ‘fair field and no favour’ is to challenge individuals to discussion without their knowledge, some of whom are about 100 miles distant, and to tell them ‘pertinaciously’ and ‘impertinently,’ by placard only, that they must pay him for admission, and, of course, for permission to accept the invitation he gives them, to approach this Whig favourite *runaway* ‘rational Radical.’

“3. That, in the opinion of this meeting, James Acland, by his placard of date the 8th current, stands self-convicted of being a spy.

“4. That the attempt of the Whigs to support him is only another proof of the r baseness, and of their consciousness of



their own want of talent, no one of themselves daring to support their own pet measure in the face of any competition.

“5. That we are convinced that this is the last dastardly Whig attempt to enforce the bloody Bastile Laws.

“6. That, convinced as we are that it is better to die by the sword than of hunger, we are determined to resist the introduction of the Whigs starvation scheme to the death.”

“During the passing of the resolutions, some persons began throwing stones at the windows, and if it had not been for the interference of the speakers, they would certainly have destroyed the building. Many windows were broken, and the doors forced, but no personal violence was used.”—*Northern Star*, Nov. 17, 1838.

“WALTON’S MUSIC-SALOON, SOUTH  
PARADE, LEEDS.

“As the Poor-Law Amendment-Act must, sooner or later, be introduced into this Borough—as certain individuals have laboured with extraordinary pertinacity to misrepresent the provisions of this important Law—and as it is of moment that all classes should correctly appreciate a subject of common interest, the inhabitants of Leeds are respectfully informed, that on Monday Evening, December 3rd, 1838, I intend delivering a Lecture on the History of Poor-Laws, their Origin and Objects.

“Admission at Seven o’clock. The Lecture (which will occupy an hour) to commence at Half-past Seven.

“At Half-past Eight, the audience will be called upon to elect a Chairman, in order to the proper conduct of a Discussion on the Merits and Demerits of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, which I hereby undertake to defend (clause by clause) against ALL Opponents, not as a perfect Act of Legislation, but as a Measure of Justice, Benevolence, and Policy; and to which end, I beg leave respectfully to invite any Opponent of the Law whatsoever to the rational test of Argument, and the easily attainable result of an unprejudiced and impartial investigation.

“Admission by Cards only:—Orchestra, 1s. 6d.—Saloon, 1s.—Gallery, 6d.

“Cards may be obtained at the Temperance Coffee-house, corner of Woodstreet; at the offices of the *Mercury* and *Times*; of Mr. Heaton, Printer, 7, Briggate; and no greater number will be issued than can be conveniently accommodated.

“Men of Leeds! In arguing the superiority of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act over any Law for the Relief of the Poor which has yet been enacted, all I require is ‘a fair field and no favour.’ If I am wrong, have the kindness to prove me so, for I seek but truth. If I am right, close not your understandings against the influence of reason, and the conviction of demonstration.

“JAMES ACLAND.

Temperance Hotel, Hall and Parkinson’s Court, Briggate, Leeds, Nov. 29, 1838.

This day is published, No. I. of the ‘WEST-RIDING LETTER-BAG,’ wherein will be found an Epistle to Mr. Perring, of the *Leeds Intelligencer*, &c., &c.”—*Northern Star*, Dec. 1, 1838.

“St. Herbert Smith, the Reverend Mawworm who, it will doubtless be recollected, took such infinite pains to stop the sale of the *Dispatch* on Sundays, has forwarded a letter to us, addressed ‘to the People of England in behalf of the Deserving Poor,’ requesting our ‘charitable aid to make known, through the medium of the *Dispatch*, his object.’ We have no wish to strike Mr. Smith a very severe blow on the face, but he must have a good cheek to ask us a favour. However, as the affair appears to interest the poor, and as we entertain no hatred or malice towards him, we will hear what the Reverend Gentleman has to say; but before we do so, it is necessary to state that he is Chaplain to the New Forest Union Workhouse, Hants. First, then, he deplores that a book he had written, called ‘An Account of a Union Chaplaincy,’ is lying on the shelf, because he cannot obtain 500 subscribers to the work.’ This ‘labour of love’ is, therefore, doomed to be interred ‘in the tomb of the Capulets.’ The object of the publication was to ‘show the kind treatment’ the inmates experience in the Bastiles! Now, without saying one word on this subject, the rascally cases which have from time to time been in the *Dispatch* sufficiently prove that his object is to gloss over the conduct of the Bashaws and the Guardians, and present to the public a statement eulogizing the Poor-Law Bill, and blaming the poor for not submitting to be quietly starved to death. Pious man! We wish him no other infliction than Bastile fare for a month; we believe his now well-clothed haunches would soon number him with Pharaoh’s tribe. Parson Smith, notwithstanding his approval of the Poor-

Law Bill, thinks that paupers entertain a great abhorrence for the gaol workhouses, and in a pamphlet he sets forth the advantages of erecting alms-houses, in the maintenance of which the expense, he urges, would not be greatly, if at all, increased:—‘Such a system would also make a distinction between virtue and vice, between the deserving and undeserving. Let almshouses be the allotted asylum for the deserving, and workhouses the refuge for the undeserving, to prevent their perishing from want.’ We do not feel disposed to quarrel with our friend; his intentions may be very good; but his views, if carried into effect, would have a very bad tendency. The almshouses would be pointed at as places for the virtuous and aged, while the huge Bastiles, in all their hideous deformity, would stand in their true character. They would, indeed, be prisons, and the inmates branded as a vicious, disorderly set of rogues and vagabonds, instead of a body of persons deserving commiseration and support.”—*Weekly Dispatch*, Nov. 11, 1838.

“Upon the subject of the Poor-Laws, on which alone my opponents rest their claim to your support, I should wish the electors to ask them what their views on this question are; they vituperate the new law, and would get rid of it, but what then? Would they have no Poor-Laws, or would they return to the old system again? Would they once more adopt the plan of making up the deficiency of wages from the poor-rates? Would they do away with the popular election of Guardians, and have them appointed as formerly by the magistrates? I suspect they find it easier to abuse than to amend. Electors! I wish to be perfectly explicit on this important subject. A bill is now before the House of Commons for the alteration and amendment of the New Poor-Law Act, and if I have the honour to be returned as your representative, I shall lend my zealous and hearty assistance in modifying such parts of it as seem to press hardly upon the poor. With regard to the important question of out-door relief, I am strongly of opinion that in large trading towns like yours the workhouse cannot properly be used for a test of destitution as it may in an agricultural district. In a time of sudden and general stagnation of trade, we should consider well before we break up the working man’s home; and, in a case like this, I think that a discretionary power of acting may very properly be confided to the Guardians of the

poor. But, after all, and above all, the primary object of legislation should be to secure to the working man the full value for his labour, and this object I am confident can only be effected by a *total repeal of the corn-laws*, as you know from experience that dear bread lowers wages, and cheap bread raises them. I want justice to the working man, not that he should be dependent upon charity.”—*Mr. G. G. De H. Larpent’s “Address to the Electors at Nottingham,”* April 22, 1841.

“To argue against the perpetuity of the central board in London, and to protest against the expensive multiplication of Assistant-Commissioners, is a widely different thing from advocating the abrogation of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act itself, or advising a recurrence to all the flagrant evils of the old system, which in many mismanaged parishes absorbed the entire rental of the land. All we have maintained is, that Boards of local Guardians are better judges of the mode and measure of administering relief than three gentlemen sitting in London, and legislating for distressed fishermen on the coast of Suffolk, frozen-out gardeners in Surrey, miners in Staffordshire, and colliers at Sunderland, for all which very different classes a metropolitan Board may at one and the same moment be called upon to consult. We have furthermore insisted, that as Boards of Guardians are constituted of rate-payers there was small apprehension of their being prodigal of funds to which they themselves contributed, as was so often, and frequently, perhaps justly urged, against the system of relief by a single magistrate. What inconsistency there has been in our upholding the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, and writing against the too rigorous rules and regulations of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and protesting against the wasteful expenditure of public money in sending immature youths from college, or mayhap the reporters’ box, to guide bearded men, is beyond our sagacity to discern. One exhortation, however, we will utter in the face of friends and foes, and in defiance of the Poor-Law Commissioners, who in their last report have actually deprecated private charity as an encouragement to improvidence, and that exhortation is an earnest appeal to the affluent to remember the poor at this inclement season. The gardener cannot dig, the husbandman’s labours in the fields are suspended, the barge is frozen in the canal, and many indoor trades are interrupted by the fright-



ful severity of the weather. Now, that out-door relief is rarely afforded, what resource is left to the poor but the charitable donations of individuals? It has been our pleasing task to record many gifts of coals and clothing, and food in many parishes; let those to whom this world's goods have been abundantly vouchsafed remember the poor and the destitute, the fatherless and the widow, and him who has none to help. While the wind roars above the roof, and the wealthy, in their well carpeted and warmly curtained rooms, cluster around their blazing fires with a keener sense of enjoyment from the raging tempest without, let them remember the poor creatures who have no fire and scarcely food, and hasten from their abundance to warm the cold, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. While urging these considerations upon the attention of our affluent readers, we are not insensible to the cheering fact that in no realm of Christendom are the gifts of charity so liberally dispensed as in England, but the unusual protraction of the frost, and the instant evils it brings upon the labouring classes, evils that may not instantaneously occur to the minds of those who have less immediate intercourse with the poor, induce us to call attention to their necessities. The political economists will say that the labourer ought, in the dog days of summer, to have anticipated the probability of a frost, and laid by from his earnings enough to purchase winter fuel. Alas, what wicked mockery is this! And yet it is gravely urged as an argument against alms-giving in the last report of the Poor-Law Commissioners, which we have been censured for condemning."—*Baxter's "Sussex Express."* Feb. 13, 1841.

"Our attention has been drawn to a penny pamphlet, or tract, entitled '*The whole History and Mystery of the New Poor-Law*,' which has evidently been fabricated in the Board-room of some Union workhouse, if not in the still more exalted region of Somerset-house. It is published by that eminent wholesale and retail dealer in useful knowledge, Mr. Charles Knight, of Ludgate-hill; and as, by means of the strong recommendation and diligent distribution of the Poor-Law Commissioners and their admirers, it has managed to get through several editions, we think it may not be amiss to co-operate with those functionaries in the laudable work of bringing some of its statements prominently into notice at the present time.

"It can hardly be necessary to remind our readers of the frequency and the earnestness with which we have pointed out the tendency of all the proceedings of the Poor-Law Commissioners to the entire abolition of relief to the poor, except in the workhouse. This is the whole end and purpose of their policy, and till this is accomplished they will think little of any intermediate results. We have traced their steps from their first peremptory prohibition of out-door relief to the able-bodied, to the suggestions by which, in their last report, they shadow forth the contemplated extension of that order to the two large classes of widows with families, and old and infirm persons partially able to work. And in the reluctantly-abandoned clause introduced by them into the Bill now before Parliament, for enabling Boards of Guardians to farm out 'any class or classes' of their poor by contract to other Unions having workhouse-room to spare, we detected the cloven-footed attempt to facilitate the universal application of the workhouse test by a system of separation and distribution which would have infinitely aggravated its cruelty.

"The country is entitled to ask Sir Robert Peel, and the Conservatives who act with him, whether they desire eventually to confine Poor-Law relief to the workhouse or not? If they do, it would be honest in them to say so; and we feel confident that enough humanity and independence would be found left in England to cast off the statesman and the party who dared to make such a declaration. If they do not, we ask them whether it is prudent, or reasonable, or consistent, or humane, to concede the administration of the Poor-Law, upon discretionary principles, to persons whose avowed design it is to bring about this result?

"Will the Poor-Law Conservatives answer, that they disbelieve in the existence of such a design on the part of the Commissioners? Will they persist in giving these functionaries credit for the amount of out-door relief which the want of workhouse accommodation compels, or temporary motives of policy induce, them now to tolerate, against their inclinations and their principles? Shall we be reminded, that in the debate on the 27th ult. Lord John Russell gave 'a statement of the relief granted to the poor according to the course pursued by the Commissioners, who were described as such cruel administrators of the law;'

informing the House of Commons, that 'in the quarter ending Lady-day, 1840, the number of persons relieved by in-door relief was 134,000, whilst the number of those relieved by out-door relief amounted to 747,000?' We disposed of that statement at the time, in a manner which must have convinced every person who read our exposure, that it was among the most fallacious ever made, even by the maintainers of the New Poor-Law. But if one individual exists who is really sceptical as to the views and intentions of the Poor-Law Commissioners in this particular, we commend to his notice the following passage from the tract now before us—a tract not abounding in honest or straightforward passages, and therefore the more worthy of attention when it ventures upon a simple and unflinching announcement like this :—

"Some people think, that ALL, *all the paupers, that is, all the men and women who cannot wholly maintain themselves, ought to live in the workhouse. No doubt it would be better for the labouring classes in general if they did*, because then it would be certain they could not be taking away the work from other people, and so taking the bread out of other people's mouths; *but at present there are not workhouses large enough to hold them all, so that this part of the new plan will be only gradually adopted. Larger workhouses will by degrees be built*; and labouring people will be very much to blame if they do not lay by something while they are in full work and in good health, that they may not be without a shilling in case of accident or sickness, so as to keep out of the workhouse."

"We repeat our question, does Sir Robt. Peel approve of this? If he does not, how can he make himself a party to an 'experiment,' which those who conduct it wish to bring to such a termination?"

"While we thank the Poor-Law Commissioners and their pamphleteer for so unequivocal a declaration of their intentions, we can find no words sufficient to express the feeling which it excites in our minds. It is a kind of notice to quit issued to the poor—a warning to all who may hereafter become destitute, aged, or sick, that their inherited interest in the soil and property of Great Britain will be invaded, and clogged with such intolerable conditions as may extort from the majority of them a compulsory abandonment of their right. Posterity will have some difficulty in believing that the system which proposes to itself this result, was supported by men, like Sir James Graham, who vindicate the corn laws on

the principle of vested interests,—by men like Sir Robert Inglis, who look upon church-rates as an absolute, inalienable portion of the endowments of the church, injuring no man, because all have taken their property subject to it, and incapable of being withdrawn without spoliation and robbery,—by men, like Lord Stanley, who would not abolish even West-Indian slavery without paying £20,000,000 of compensation to the class whose legal rights were unfavourably affected by that act of justice. Do these statesmen hold, that the only tax which can continue for centuries without conferring a vested interest is that for the relief of the poor; or that the poor are the only class whose vested interests ought not to be respected?"

"But it is alleged, that by tampering with the vested interests of the destitute we improve the condition of the able-bodied labourer. Would such an argument be admitted to be a valid reason for tampering with the property of the Duke of Bedford? We trow not. But, after all, how does the argument run? 'If all paupers were compelled to live in the workhouse, it would be better for the labouring classes in general, because then it would be certain they could not be taking away the work from other people, and so taking the bread out of the people's mouths.' The premises happen to be as false as the conclusion is unwarrantable; and the cold-blooded theorist might have learnt as much even from his own science of political economy. Are not all paupers who cannot wholly maintain themselves unproductive members of society? Is not their maintenance at the public expense a burden upon the people's labour, whether they are maintained in or out of the workhouse? Do they not, by eating bread which they do not earn, increase the price of provisions, 'and so take the bread out of other people's mouths?' Our economist cannot escape from this result. The only way to carry his principle fairly into effect, and to get rid altogether of the pressure of the destitute upon the industrious classes, will be to adopt the easy and expeditious method of a certain Indian tribe, mentioned by an ancient historian, who were accustomed to kill off all the impotent and the aged, as fast as they became burdensome to the community. We have no doubt that such a summary way of disposing of them 'would be better for the labouring classes in general,' in that pecuniary sense which constitutes the economist's notion of good



and evil; and it might possibly have the effect of raising wages, or at all events would avoid the peculiar evils of the *old* poor law—two considerations, which seem to furnish the only criteria by which our legislators estimate any principle or practice having reference to the subject of Poor-Law administration.” — *Times*, April 15, 1841.

“The pamphlet entitled, ‘The whole History and Mystery of the New Poor-Law,’ to which we adverted yesterday, is well worthy of being generally perused and studied, as a specimen of the depth of view, and honesty and veracity of statement, which characterize the Poor-Law Commissioners and their satellites. It is designed for distribution among the lower orders, and certainly proves that Messrs. Senior, Jones Loyd, and Co., faithfully represented the opinion of their sect, when they described the working population generally as sunk in a state of miserable and degraded ignorance. The Commissioners are, of course, anxious to remove this ignorance by the sovereign remedy of a liberal education, superintended by themselves; but in the mean time, and until so desirable an end can be accomplished, they are not unwilling to practise upon the gullibility of the unenlightened intellect, and, by an innocent Jesuitism, to recommend themselves and the law which they administer to those who are most interested in its working, at some slight sacrifice of truth.

“The following extract (while it labours under the trifling drawback to which we have alluded) must be admitted to be conceived with infinite boldness and spirit. The effrontery with which it claims for the New Poor-Law the credit of a tender consideration for the rights of the poor, carried out at what linendrapers call an ‘unprecedented sacrifice’ on the part of the rich, can only be compared to the coolness of an experienced ‘gentleman of the swell mob,’ who gives into custody upon a charge of pilfering the very man whose pocket he has been picking:—

“‘It no doubt *costs the parish more money* to maintain a man wholly, either in or out of the workhouse, than only to give him half his maintenance and let him earn the rest; *but, IN THESE TIMES, the rights of the poor are considered in making the laws, as well as the benefit of the rich*; and it is no more than right to protect the labouring man from having the work he ought to do done by the parish

pauper, even although it should cost the parishioners a little more money.’

“We desire to make no comment upon this passage, beyond informing our readers, that it occurs immediately after the announcement of the Commissioners’ intention to confine relief altogether to the workhouse, when the necessary accommodation can be provided.

“But we shall not abstain from exposing the puerile fallacy (ridiculous, if it did not tend to painful and demoralizing practical consequences) which is involved in this extraordinary statement, and which, indeed, it is the object of the whole tract to recommend. We are told that, in justice to the industrious labourer, it is necessary to administer the Poor-Law in such a manner as may ‘withdraw entirely from the labour market’ all old, infirm, and partially disabled persons, who cannot earn a sufficient livelihood by their own exertions. In other words, that we must either ‘resolutely refuse relief to all such persons, except in the workhouse’ (the alternative most in favour), or pension them off in compulsory idleness, rigidly interdicting them from doing any work at all. ‘The fact is,’ says the tract, ‘there is a certain quantity of work to be done, and the question is, who ought to do it?—*those who live by their labour, AND THEIR LABOUR ONLY*, or those who have thrown themselves on public charity? The intention of the new law is, that the work should be done, and the wages enjoyed, by those who will maintain themselves and their families by their own industry.’ An imaginary case is stated of one Mr. Hobson, who refused to give his labourers more than 7s. a-week for work which was worth 9s., because he could get two infirm men, who were each allowed 3s. 6d. a-week by the parish, to do it for 7s. And an old errand woman is called into existence, who received 1s. 6d. a-week from the parish, and made 2s. a-week more by her journeys. ‘When the new law came into force, the Board of Guardians at once told her to choose between her travels and her allowance; that she could not receive money from the parish and earn money besides; and that if she could not maintain herself, she might be allowed 3s. a-week and do nothing.’ She ‘very thankfully took the allowance;’ and what was the consequence? An errand boy was created by the regular operation of the principles of supply and demand, and got 5s. a-week for his labour.

“Without stopping to compare these imaginary facts to the fable of the lion and the man, we will just point out a few of the assumptions contained in the doctrine which they are intended to illustrate, and some of the consequences to which it leads. We think this the more necessary, as it is not merely the doctrine of the anonymous pamphleteer, but of the Commissioners themselves—it is largely insisted upon in their last annual report; and it is practically carried out in many places. First, it seems to assume that the disabled and the able-bodied men enter the market as competitors upon equal terms, except that the former has the advantage of a parish allowance. The absurdity of this is obvious. Any one who can perform 9s. worth of labour in a week can earn full wages, and is therefore no proper subject for Poor-Law relief. But if a man is only capable of doing 7s. worth of labour, it is plain that the farmer who employs him for those wages, in preference to an able-bodied labourer who requires 9s., and will do work in proportion, gains nothing by his bargain; if he pays less, he receives less in return. The argument, therefore, fails in the case where the pauper works for wages nominally inferior, but really equivalent to the value of his inferior labour. But what shall we say if the pauper is induced to work for wages *less* than the value of his labour, by the circumstance that he does not live by his labour *only*, relying primarily upon the parish fund, and counting everything gain which he can scrape together in addition to his allowance? We say, first, that if the allowance is calculated, as it ought to be, with a due regard to what the pauper is capable of earning and likely to earn, this will not and cannot be the case; secondly, that the Poor-Law Commissioners may as well attempt to extirpate diseases, or to establish universal happiness, as to restrict the supply of labour to persons who rely exclusively upon labour for their subsistence. The smallest of the disturbing causes which influence the labour market (if, indeed, it has any place among them at all) is the ‘underbidding’ of the partially disabled labourers, who receive parish relief. Even the omnipotence of the Commissioners cannot prevent those who have property or realized capital, which brings them annual returns, from entering the labour market and selling their labour (as they can afford to do) at an inferior price. Nay, more, the very inculcation

of provident habits upon the poor would, upon this principle, be suicidal; the more they save, the further will they be removed from the class of ‘those who live by their labour and their labour only.’ Need we say more to show the folly of the doctrine?

“Another glaring fallacy is the assumption that the demand for the imperfect labour of that disabled class who are forced to depend partially upon Poor-Law relief, is in no degree precarious or peculiar, and that those persons are in every case underselling, at the public expense, others who might supply their places more advantageously upon an independent footing. The fact is, that much of the labour which these persons perform is created on purpose for them—partly from charitable motives, partly from motives of inconvenience, which would not, under any other circumstances, constitute a regular demand.

“We shall close our observations by noticing the morality of the conclusion to which the political economist would bring us in this matter. The moment a poor man’s earnings fall below the point necessary to maintain, without parish assistance, himself and his family, this rule would condemn him, either to *perpetual* imprisonment and separation from his family in a workhouse, or to *perpetual idleness* out of it. The one alternative is demoralizing, the other cruel. All experience, all philosophy, the laws of God and nature, agree in assuring us that idleness is naturally the parent of vice, and that industry continues to be a duty till it ceases to be physically possible. To those who have formed industrious habits, it is essential to happiness, as well as to the integrity of their character, to persevere in them to the end; and every shilling obtained by honest labour is worth far more than a much larger sum gratuitously supplied. To say that a man shall not work six hours, because he cannot work seven, is an insult to humanity and to reason, worthy only of the source from which it has proceeded.”—*Times*, April 16, 1841.

“The learned gentleman referred to a report which had reached him as to the effect which the economical dispositions of the Board of Guardians had produced. The report said, that during a recent occasion, when three men were on their death-beds in the Lambeth workhouse, so scurvily and so inhumanly were matters



managed therein, that one of them had begged that a light might be placed in the room, whilst another had cried out for a drop of water to moisten his parched lips, when they were told by the nurses that such luxuries and comforts were not permitted by the Board. (Cries of 'Shame!') He had no occasion, he was sure, to ask whether any in that room had ever heard of an instance where such barbarous parsimony had been enacted. No; the inhumanity had been reserved as an exhibition—as a proof of the good working of the ever-to-be-reprobated Poor-Law Amendment-Act. (Cheers, and cries of 'Hear.')

—*Mr. Grady, Lambeth Vestry Meeting, November 20, 1837.*

"MR. POWER, THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONER.—Bradford, Tuesday evening.—This town is in the greatest state of excitement, and has been so during the day, in consequence of the arrival of Mr. Power, to carry into effect the Poor-Law Bill in this neighbourhood. The magistrates attended Mr. Power to the Court-house, when a discussion arose as to the propriety of the meeting being an open one, which, however, was speedily decided by the people themselves, who threatened to take the building by assault. A scene of unusual uproar took place, the authorities met with the greatest and most determined opposition; and upon Mr. Lister, M.P. for Bradford, recommending the people to bear with the Act, now that it had become law, he, who was so popular, was met with a volley of groans and hisses; and, it is supposed, has endangered his seat. At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Power was proceeding to the Sun Inn, when a general assault took place, in which the Commissioner suffered severely; he reached the hotel, however, but in a state of considerable exhaustion from the loss of blood, occasioned by a wound under the eye. He was covered with mud, and had to run the gauntlet, receiving no assistance from magistrates or people. The town is still crowded with country people, in a state of great excitement, which is considerably increased in consequence of the trade of this place being in a very depressed state, so much so that commercial gentlemen who trade for mercantile houses unanimously declare that trade was never so low in Yorkshire."—*Times, Nov. 3, 1837.*

THE VERACITY OF COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS.—"The abuses of the old law

had been said to be great, and the reports of the Commissioners teemed with statements to that effect; but, without meaning any disrespect to the Commissioners, he must say, that they were imposed upon, for he firmly believed that few, if any, such cases existed in the country as they had thought fit to lay before Parliament."—*Lord Wynford, House of Lords, July 21, 1834.*

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS' POOR-LAW COMMITTEE'S 'GOOD REPORT OF THE WORM.'—"Upon the whole they expressed their distinct opinion, that the operation of the New Poor-Law was *satisfactory*, and ought to be maintained; they entertained no doubt of the general wisdom and efficiency of its provisions. They thought, too, that the administration of the system had been in the main judicious..... They were of opinion, too, that, as far as they had the means of observing it, the authority of the Commissioners had been exercised with great discretion."—*House of Commons, end of the Session of 1837.*

THE COMMISSIONERS' CANTERBURIES.—"He had seen statements of cases in the report of the Commissioners, where women considered it a little fortune to have three or four illegitimate children, from the allowance of whose support they obtained a maintenance. He must believe that in such accounts the Commissioners were imposed upon."—*Lord Wynford, House of Lords, July 21, 1834.*

"The *Essex Herald* has the following reply of Lord Western to an application made to him by some inhabitants of Rayleigh, that he would present a petition to the House of Lords against the Poor-Law Amendment-Act: (*Sun, April 14, 1841*)—

"Sir,—I have received your letter of yesterday's date, desiring me to present a petition to the House of Lords, signed by the inhabitants of Rayleigh, the purport of which is to express an opinion strongly condemnatory of the existing Poor-Law, which is described as cruel and oppressive to the poor, also praying that the Amendment Bill may not pass into a law. I am sorry to say I cannot faithfully perform this duty you require of me, for my opinions are by no means in accordance with the petitioners'; so far from it, I consider the Poor-Law to be a most salutary measure, called for by urgent necessity to rescue the honest labourers from the state of dependence and moral degradation of spirit to which the miserable working of the Old Poor-Law had reduced them, and at the same time to preserve the security of property and the peace of society. It was enacted by the conjoint wisdom of our ablest statesmen, whose sole object, I am confident, was the wel-

fare of the people, and whose public and private characters fully warrant that belief. The best security against oppression is the publicity that attends all our proceedings under the present law, which did not exist under the old. That some cases of hardship may occur, no man can doubt; where is the law that can provide against all the ills that human nature is liable to, from unavoidable accident, from idleness, and vice? There is not in the known world a country in which such efforts are made, such laws in force, to obviate all the misfortunes and calamities of life. The present law I am determined zealously to support, and I concur in most if not all the amendments of the Bill now under consideration. Under these circumstances I think you will deem it expedient to put the petition into the hands of some other peer. I am, Sir, your obedient, humble servant,

“WESTERN.”

“To James Peare, Esq.”

“MR. G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER AND THE POST-OFFICE. — This gentleman, well known as the Editor of *Don Juan, Junior*, and the associate of Mr. Oastler, in his determined opposition to the infamous New Poor-Law, has been for some time past engaged in investigating the causes of the frequent miscarriage and total loss of newspapers passing through the post, which at present occur. It is the intention, we understand, of Mr. Baxter, to bring the matter before the two Houses of Legislature, and so expose the infamous and un-English system which now, for the base servitude of party purposes and malevolence, exists in the Post-office departments—metropolitan and provincial. Mr. Baxter has, as will be perceived by his recent communications on the subject in the papers, been frequently annoyed by the unwarrantable detention, and total loss of his newspapers—detained and lost, as he says, ‘*purposely, spitefully, and revengefully, by the St. Martin’s powers that be*,’ because of his (Mr. B.’s) connexion with Mr. Richard Oastler, and his unqualified hostility to the Bastille decree. Our contemporaries of the *broad sheet* will do well to extract this paragraph into their columns, as it concerns their interests *vitality* that a safe conduct should be guaranteed to their several periodicals transmitted through the Post-office to their subscribers—for if Post-office ‘flunkies’ are permitted to break official faith with impunity, and tamper with the newspapers, &c., entrusted to their conveyance, and for which adequate carriage, in the way of a tax, is paid—there is an end to all business, and the sooner every Journalist, from the Land’s-end to Johnny Groat’s, breaks

up his type and establishment the better!”  
—*Sheffield Iris*, April, 12, 1846.

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

“SIR,—Can you inform your readers whether the Mr. Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner Hawley, who appears to be implicated in an inquiry now before the House of Lords respecting the falsification of certain Poor-Law documents, is the same Mr. Assistant-Commissioner Hawley who gave the following evidence before the Poor-Law Committee of the House of Commons in 1837 :—

“ ‘ William Henry Toovey Hawley, Esq., called in, and examined.

“ ‘ Question 975 (by the Chairman).—You are an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner?—I am.

“ ‘ Question 976.—How long have you been so?—I was appointed in November, 1834, soon after the passing of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act.

“ ‘ Question 977.—What is your salary as Poor-Law Commissioner?—£700 a-year.

“ ‘ Question 978.—Have you any other emoluments?—The Assistant-Commissioners have a guinea a-day during the time they are absent in their districts.

“ ‘ Question 1,015.—You are charged with having made garbled extracts; will you simply give your explanation of that?—My letter to the clerk of the Guardians requested his opinion of the application of the Poor-Law in the Petworth Union, not in any parish particularly, but in the parishes collectively. The only extract from Mr. Daintrey’s letter which I conceived it was necessary for me to insert, was that which appears in the report, which begins thus :—‘ I must, however, be permitted to observe that, so far as the partial application of the spirit of the new law can enable us to form an opinion of the moral effect of it, it has been good.’ I should state that I have omitted the word ‘moral’ in my report merely from overlooking it. The word ‘moral’ was a word of great consequence to me, and I omitted it unfortunately by oversight; it was not omitted wilfully.

“ ‘ Question 1,160 (by Mr. Walter).—You have stated that you receive only £700 a-year. By the Parliamentary vote there is £800 voted to each Assistant-Commissioner; did you receive that sum?—Not as a part of the salary.

“ ‘ Question 1,161.—Did you receive £800 in addition to the £700.?—I am not able to answer that question as to the amount.

“ ‘ Question 1,162.—The note says, travelling and incidental expenses, when absent on service, including clerks and their travelling expenses, £800; did you receive that?—I am not able to state what sum I received: that I received a sum is certain, of course.’

“ I learn from the *Times* that some Assistant-Commissioners were sent from England to Ireland, and that a Mr. Hawley is to be brought over from Ireland to be examined. If the Irish Mr. Hawley and the English one are identical, I hope their Lordships will deal leniently with a man whose memory is so treacherous that



in the copy of an official document he leaves out a matter which he admits to be 'of great consequence;' and deliberately asserts, after receiving his pay as an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner for nearly three years, that he knows nothing about the amount of salary which he is in the receipt of, but he receives 'a sum is certain, of course!'

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient, humble servant,

"A CONSTANT READER."

—*Times*, April 15, 1841.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUSSEX EXPRESS.

"SIR,—I think you will concur with me in sentiments of astonishment and alarm in observing the announced intention of the Whig Radical Government to continue the unconstitutional and excessive powers of the triumvirate of Somerset-house, with all their satellites, for ten years longer! Surely the country will not endure this? When once *law*, it must be obeyed, and every good subject will then try to make the best of it. But, thank Heaven! it has not yet passed through Parliament, and even in the *Reformed House* there are some good old-fashioned members who will not be contented to see the whole body of the poor of Great Britain committed for ten years longer to the tender mercies of the Poor-Law Commissioners. And in the meantime I would call upon you, Sir, and the Conservative press, which I rejoice to say is generally opposed to this measure, I would call upon parishes, and Boards of Guardians, and the gentry and yeomanry of England, whom this law practically declares to be incapable of managing their own affairs, and I would call upon the clergy whom I believe to be opposed to enactments, the cruelty of which, pressing upon their poorer brethren, none know better than they. I would call upon all these by remonstrance and petitions to use their legitimate influence to prevent the enactment of a measure which is founded neither on *humane* nor on *Christian principles*. The Scripture says, 'If a man *will not* work, neither shall he eat.' The Poor-Law Commissioners say, 'If a man *cannot* work, neither shall he eat,' unless, indeed, he will accept the bread of affliction, and the water of bitterness, in a Union workhouse. I speak not of the idle and the profligate, who bring their sufferings on themselves, but of honest, industrious labourers, whose poverty is their only crime—

"For whom if labour spread its wholesome store,  
And gave what life required, and gave no more,'

they would be satisfied and happy—but they can get no work, and are treated as criminals.

"I have spoken of the powers of the Commissioners as excessive, and shall I not be borne out in this assertion by any one who has ever attended a Board of Guardians, and listened to any one of their imperial edicts commencing with, 'Now we, the Poor-Law Commissioners, hereby order and command,' and ending with 'E. Chadwick!' leaving nothing to Guardians and rate-payers, the former of whom by their name are supposed to *protect the poor*, and the latter—who raise the funds for their maintenance—leaving nothing to them, I say, but to carry the orders of their masters, however they may disapprove of them, into execution, and to pay whatever money is required without presuming to ask for what purpose it is intended? Mr. Tuffnell, the Assistant-Commissioner, indeed, said the other day, that not a single Union workhouse could have been built without the concurrence of the Guardians. I always thought that this was the great '*test*,' as it is called, of the necessity of relief, and if the Guardians of the United Kingdom had been generally so contumacious as to refuse to build these expensive—*tests*—would there not, let me ask, very soon have been an imperative order from Somerset-house compelling such rebels to *give their consent*? It reminds me of the '*Congé d'élire*' to a Dean and Chapter to elect a 'Bishop,' whom the minister of the day is kind enough to elect for them.

"That the powers of the Commissioners are *unconstitutional* is clear from the fact that they are *above the law*, for they are commissioned, not so much to see that an Act of Parliament is carried into effect, as—from time to time, to make fresh orders which are to have the authority of law, and to give arbitrary interpretations of their own, of every one of its provisions. And however extensive their powers have been hitherto, Lord John Russell, that *soi-disant* liberal, that professed friend to the liberty of the subject, proposes actually to *increase* them for the next 10 years. They are to have the power of uniting Unions for the purpose of maintaining District Idiot Asylums, District Hospitals, and District Schools, where they may educate the children of the

poor according to the approved Government plan! that is to say—unfitting them for that situation of life ‘in which it has pleased God to place them,’ and taking no care to provide for them afterwards in a sphere for which they may be fit—if indeed they will be fit for any. Whilst at the same time schools must still be supported in the present Union-Houses, unless the children who are compelled to come there by distress with their parents for a short time are to be wholly neglected, and the pockets of the rate-payers are expected to furnish the means for these philosophical experiments, and politico-economical theories, which rustic farmers, and poor country gentlemen, of course, cannot be expected to comprehend.

“Let me, Sir, call your attention to a recent order of the Commissioners, which has to my knowledge caused great hardship to individuals, and inconvenience to parishes; I allude to their forbidding outdoor relief to persons residing out of their Unions. Many a poor person, not finding work at home, and knowing that he must depend upon his own resources, which is quite right *as long as he has any*—has gone away many miles, and provided employment elsewhere, by which he has supported his family. After a time he falls sick; he then *has no resources*, he applies to his own parish, which dares not relieve him because it is contrary to the order of the Commissioners to assist those who live out of the Union; he then seeks assistance from the Relieving Officer of the place where he is, and is refused there because he is not a parishioner, or some little help is grudgingly doled out; a suspended order is obtained, and he is passed home, which he has left because he could not there find the means of subsistence. He is not likely therefore to find it again, and his only resource is—the workhouse—his crime being—*poverty*.

“There is another instance of arbitrary power in the Commissioners, and which, though not actually interfering much with the real welfare and comfort of the poor, yet perhaps savours as much as any other of the cold-blooded spirit of political economy, and the domineering tyranny of Somerset-house, and I know none that has given more disgust to warm and generous minds—I mean the order to discontinue for the future a good Christmas dinner to the unfortunate inmates of the workhouse. These unhappy people are to know no distinction of times and seasons, and not even on the day when all

the Christian world is rejoicing, and it is usual even for the poorest to have something better than the usual daily fare—to signify that there is cause for gladness and satisfaction. The Poor-Law Commissioners tell the rate-payers of Christian England, that they are not to permit their poor ‘brethren,’ whose misfortunes consign them to a workhouse, to know by any outward and visible sign—that Christmas—the time especially dedicated to charity and ‘goodwill to man’—is again come round, and that their happier and richer brethren around their own fire-sides do not forget them. I will answer for it—and I speak as a pretty large rate-payer myself, that nine-tenths of the rate-payers would hold up their hands in favour of this indulgence. I fear I am taking up too large a space of your valuable paper; let me then conclude in the words of our immortal poet, and use them in reference to the exorbitant powers of these Commissioners, which, at least, ought to be modified,—

‘When what’s not meet, but what must be,  
was law,  
Then they were chosen; in a better hour,  
Let what is meet—be said it must be meet,  
And throw their power i’ the dust.’

Not being ashamed of the sentiments here professed,

“I beg to remain, Sir,

“Your humble servant,

“WM. M. SMITH MARRIOTT.”

“Horsmonden, Feb. 8, 1841.”

—*Sussex Express*, Feb. 13, 1841.

“UNION DOCTORS.—The barbarous race of surgeons who flourished in days of yore, seem likely again to start into existence under the patronage of the Poor-Law Commissioners. The low rate of remuneration allowed to the Union doctors has driven many of the more respectable practitioners from the field, so that the practice has at times fallen into the hands of the unscrupulous and incompetent. As a specimen of the acquirements of one of this class, we insert, verbatim, an extract from an official return made by a district doctor to the Guardians of a Union, at a snug village in the north of Devon. The return, which is before us, gives the name, age, and disease of the patients, to which is appended the following remark by the learned doctor respecting the treatment:—‘This man *have* not been here lately, but *have* been trying a parcel of old women’s fancies.’”—*Annals of Medicine*.



"Down with all Poor-Laws," the Malthusians cry,  
 "For Poor-Laws injure private charity."  
 "Down with all charity"—exclaim the three  
 Stern despots over want and misery,  
 "Down with all charity—no alms—they cause  
 "Results injurious to our *kind* Poor-Laws."  
 Well must our poor 'mid such wild dogmas fare,  
 Bereft of private aid and public care.—*Times*.

Not long ago an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, whose *arrondissement* lay in a Welsh district, made the romantic and fashionable little watering-place of T—, his head-quarters. Now this young gentleman, like Cæsar, all at once became "ambitious,"—not, however, of fame, like that man of war, but of foppery, like a man of ton; and, above all things, in secret sighed to have his chin adorned with what the fashionable novelists are pleased to call an "imperial." What were his innate and particular motives for desiring to possess such a hirsute appendage, I cannot take upon myself to say; but Mr. Edwin Chadwick, Secretary, who keeps and chronicles an accurate account of all the sayings and doings of the Commission when on the tramp, will, I dare say, if requested civilly by letter, give the necessary information. Perhaps this well-wisher for an additional whisker deemed, as he, like his fellows, had slain his thousands *with the jaw-bone of an ass*, that he might rank as a colonel in the army at least, and, consequently, had a right to sport such a martial tip; and if the right to turn the human face Divine into an old, hairy, travelling trunk, depended upon the number of mankind killed and wounded by the aspirant, he, undoubtedly, had well won and possessed an infinitely better title to make himself a beast than half the bold dragoons and gallant hussars (not excepting Prince Albert's, or my Lord Cardigan's), whose unshaven and shaggy appearances so frequently fright peaceful and propriety-loving subjects into distressing hysterics and fits of ague. But, perhaps, his reasons for longing to exhibit the aforesaid tip smacked more of benevolence, and less of the battle-field—or, I should rather say, review-field (there are no battle-fields now), than fastidious folk were disposed to give him credit for. It may be he repented of the havoc he, in conjunction with his orders, rules, and regulations, had caused among his poorer countrymen, and to render amends, determined

to cashier his destructive propensities for the nonce, and call into activity his reproductive ones, and populate a *lectle*, and the imperial which he had coaxed on his chin was to specify, like the band on a Peeler's sleeve, that he was on duty. In a word, he perchance desired, by way of agreeable relaxation, to transact a little business as a commercial man, and that on the generous principles, now become fashionable by the blessed Bastardy clause, of nothing to pay and find yourself—'tis all the girls' fault, &c.

At any rate, let his motives for generating a tuft be what they may, he was determined, at all hazards, rescue or no rescue by the barbers, to have one, and for the space of three calendar weeks, inclusive of Sundays, shut himself up in his rooms, and morning, noon, and night, incessantly basted his face with bears'-dripping and soot, the former to breed the desirable bristles, and the latter to give them, when bred, a good colour; for, sooth to say, he was more addicted to the cultivation of carrots than he liked the world—especially the fair inhabitants thereof—to be made acquainted with. But don't let any one be as stupid as forty cats in a wallet, and suppose, that during this probationary period of lying in wait for hairs, he subjected himself to the specified drops and ounces of his own pauper diet-tables. Not a bit of it; he regularly lined his under waistcoat with curries and conserves, diurnally lipped his six bottles of bees' wing, besides draughts of other strong drink occasionally, and of nights several unsophisticated tumblers of nightcaps.

The process of the procreation of his "imperial" progressed wonderfully by the application to the part affected of the fat of bears and bottles; and one morning, at the latter end of the third week of his "confinement," he looked himself in the face in the glass (he could not do so without *blushing*—Commissioners never can), glories and Horseguards! it was just the one thing needful! Without

more to do, he called for his boots and his beaver, and issued forth to astonish, as he inwardly determined, the male sorts, and make the female sorts feel they didn't know how, and think him such a nice, dear fellow—such a count! But what was his dismay, his horror of horrors' head, when, after parading with a fierce step and stare the streets of T——, from top to termination, he detected a natural tendency in all the little girls he passed to clap their fingers to their chins, and cry "*Maa, maa!*" There was not one he met but who, as soon as she saw him, did so. Our Assistant-Commissioner was ready to burst his stays with anger and vexation. Oh! that he had the young minxes in the workhouse—wouldn't he riddle them inside out with "skillygree"—wouldn't he black-hole them—wouldn't he have their heads in the frame in no time, and cut all their hair off, to take down their pride!—wouldn't he have every mother's blessed daughter of them stripped to the chemise, and then laid on a table and flogged, *a la* the Master of the Hoo Union workhouse's admirable method, "until the blood came," and they felt it! But he hadn't them in the workhouse, and what could he do? In vain he regarded them, individually, with that black, livid, savage look, with which he was wont to cower to despair the old and trembling paupers—that evil and stony eye, with which he had often laid waste the very heart of the mother, entreating "to do let her child remain with her," and sent her shrieking away—there they were, those young maids, "forty like one," shaking their jolly little chins between their fingers, and incessantly mimicing, "*Maa, maa!*" Mr. Assistant-Commissioner C—— could not bear it; for once the brass with which every Somerset-house official clothes his countenance, as with a mask, fairly melted away beneath the simultaneous resound of innumerable "*Maas, maas!*" Ten thousand fiends and their wives and daughters! had Plinlimmon and Snowdon, like the hills and mountains described in the Psalms, become locomotive, and, after having taken steps and skipped their fill, arrived, with all their four-footed inhabitants, at T——, to avail themselves of the benefit of sea-bathing? He rushed home to his lodgings—he scraped—he cut—he tore the *offensive bit of beastliness* from his chin—ordered out a 'yellow' immediately, and, with four horses, scoured out of the place as if "Cadwallader and

all his goats," were in hot pursuit. It is needless to narrate that this Mr. Assistant-Commissioner C—— has never been seen or heard of since in the town or neighbourhood of T——.

Glory to the little girls of Cambria! Could not such an appropriate greeting of Assistant Poor-Law Commissioners, whenever they make their infamous appearance in the streets and thoroughfares of England and Wales, be universally adopted? Mothers of Britain, teach your daughters the trick, will you? *Probatum est* everywhere, from his heart of hearts, says *G. R. Wythen Baxter*, April 28, 1841.

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"The attention of the people of England is at this time particularly directed to certain measures introduced into the House of Commons, with regard to the continuance of the Poor-Law Commission in its present, or in a somewhat amended form. The debates upon this important subject are perused with more than ordinary interest, not only by those who are immediately affected by that law, but by many who regard the whole affair merely as an experiment how provision can best be made for the poor. We find, on one hand, strong statements of existing hardships; which are, on the other, rebutted by arguments that these are only *abuses* of the system, not natural consequences—that such hardships were not intended by the framers of it—that if this law be a bad one, the former was equally so—that in every trial on so extensive a scale, there must of necessity be some failures—and, as if to crown the whole, that the interests of the individual must be sacrificed for the public good. The author trusts that this will be considered a fair statement of the case at issue, and, if it were necessary, would add, by way of rejoinder, and taking the arguments inversely, that in the present instance the interests affected are *not individual*, but those of a *vast body* of the community—that the failures are too frequent to be considered only as exceptions to the rule—that even to be no worse than the old law cannot constitute a merit in the new—and that no one possessed of the common feelings of humanity can suppose that the suffering said to exist is intentionally caused. But, dismissing all these as subordinate to the proposition which stands first in order, viz., that the alleged grievances are only *abuses* of the existing law, he imagines that he shall be enabled



to prove, by a plain statement of facts, that they are the natural results of the principle upon which that law is founded; and if so, the subject will resolve itself into an inquiry, not *how long* the present enactments shall retain their force, but whether it would not be advisable to adopt some other plan at the earliest opportunity that can *with safety* be found."—*A Voice from Scotland; or, The English Poor-Law Considered,* &c., by the Rev. J. V. Austin, April, 1841.

"The grand principle of which this system boasts is *Centralization*, a high-sounding word borrowed, it would appear, from the art of warfare, but certainly misapplied in the case before us, because, instead of *one* directing power we are here furnished with *three*. Its practicability depends upon combining decision of purpose with rapidity in execution. The former certainly belongs to the triumvirate, but scarcely a day passes without some complaint of delay in their proceedings. Doubtless, the Commissioners have so great a pressure of business on hand, that out of the vast number of cases submitted to them, many require time for mature reflection. Reasoning from cause to effect, let us trace the practical result of this want of expedition; and here we must appeal to facts, which, to use the hackneyed saying, are stubborn things. The gentlemen at Somerset-house, amidst the weightier matters before them, seem to regard it as of comparatively little importance, in short, trifling with their vocation, to discuss the question—"Shall rice milk be at times substituted for water gruel?" A Board of Guardians, however, are waiting their fiat, and unable to give an order until this simple question is decided; in the meanwhile, a surgeon is restricted from changing the diet of his patients unless duly authorized by the Board, and *fifty persons die of diarrhæa*. 'Ah!' sighs many a kind-hearted gentleman, as he cons his daily paper, 'How very shocking!' Again, with a laudable desire to prevent the possibility of intemperance, a decree is made to prohibit the introduction of spirituous or fermented liquors into the House. 'A most excellent provision!' says the same worthy individual, as he sips his port with gusto: whilst, possibly, at that very moment, a wretched being, whose only crime is poverty, after a journey of fifteen miles in an open cart, with the thermometer ten degrees below the freezing point, is gasping in the last stage of exhaustion, and

dies for want of some remedy more stimulant than Union tea or gruel. The supporters of the Bill may, perhaps, reply that these cases are *isolated*, and studiously set forth in opposition to it; but I only bid them appeal to experience, and I assert, without fear of contradiction, that, for every case that meets the public eye, there exist *ten*, nay, a *hundred*, of suffering, mental and bodily, with which the great mass of the community are *totally* unacquainted. Those only who have watched the actual working of the stringent clauses, and drawn their judgment from personal observation, can so much as dream of the secrets of the prison-houses."—*Ibid*.

"The Commissioners are talented, excellent men, but naturally enough wedded to the existing system (I scorn to attribute to them any *mercenary* motive!) disposed strictly to enforce what they conscientiously believe to be right and proper. The Assistants, as far as we can learn, are equally worthy; a little authoritative, perhaps, in their manners, and at least as anxious to retain their posts as are their superiors. Their occupation is to make periodical visits throughout their several districts, to inspect the state of the Unions, hear alleged grievances, and report the result to head-quarters. Next, we have the constituent members of the periodical Boards, taken from a class which has been usually regarded as England's strongest bulwark, her yeomanry. Then follow, in due order, the several distinctions of Auditors, Relieving Officers, Masters, Surgeons, and Chaplains. Such are the materials of which the frame-work is composed, yet, excellent in themselves, they are but ill-fitted to support the structure which has been raised. Granted that the farmers of England are men of sense, no one I think will consider them over-sensitive. They are tolerably sound reasoners, yet not without strong prejudices; and, though very far from unfeeling, are not *too* susceptible. Let it not be thought that I am in any way disparaging a class for which every lover of his country must entertain the profoundest respect. On the introduction of the New Poor-Laws into a Union, we can imagine that a laudable spirit of emulation has kindled in the breast of such a one, the desire of becoming Guardian of his parish. He succeeds: and his pride is in a little degree flattered by the position he has attained, possibly, after some contest. He resolves to watch

the state of affairs very closely, to attend regularly to his new duties, and give the system a fair trial. Methinks I hear some advocate of the law exclaim, can anything be more direct or better planned? I confess the picture is a bright one, but let us examine it in another light. The worthy Guardian is for a time constant at his post, indefatigable in his inquiries, and satisfied with everything around him; but a bad season has caused a failure in his early crop—he must bestir himself on his farm to-day, such a place must be visited—to-morrow, he will ride over and see how things are looking up—but stop:—to-morrow is *Board-day*: duty and inclination are now at variance: which shall he follow? Without analyzing too closely the progress of his feelings, we may venture to affirm that he either relaxes in his attendance, thus leaving *all the poor of his parish without a representative*, or betakes himself to the Board-room in a temper unfitted for the calm discharge of his duties. This temper is not likely to be soothed by information that, in consequence of a disturbance among the inmates, arising from a refusal on the part of the Master to increase their rations one ounce per diem (or from some other equally absurd (?) cause), a correspondence has been held with the Commissioners, which the clerk proceeds to read in detail, setting forth the virtuous indignation of the higher powers at the insolence of such a request—their determination in no way to depart from the rules laid down—their astonishment that the Board of Guardians should have given a kind of sanction to innovation, &c., &c., &c. Or, supposing it to be inspection-day: our friend, the Guardian, accompanies the Assistant-Commissioner through the several departments, which have been cleaned and ventilated (*I will not say especially*) for the occasion. The official gentleman peeps into the sick-ward, questions the old people, looks dignified at the children, and frowns magisterially upon the refractory parties, concluding his labours by a luncheon off the regulation soup, which he pronounces excellent, departs, highly pleased at the condition of the House, or sometimes complaining that the atmosphere is rather too close, for which a remedy must be contrived before his next visit. Business being ended, our Guardian rides homeward in deep thought, and soon begins to wonder what could have induced him to neglect his own affairs, and attend meetings in which *he has no*

*real power*; doubts arise as to the actual necessity of an Assistant-Commissioner; and at last, he resolves to resign office at the end of the year. Attendance becomes irksome; but, as he is to a certain extent responsible for the working of the system, such as it is, he determines to display his influence and exercise his authority by saving as much of the parish money as he can. The motive is a good one, the purpose in itself praiseworthy—**WHO ARE THE SUFFERERS?**

“The Auditors, from the very nature of their office, are bound to adhere to the strict letter of the law, and to be scrupulously watchful over the expenditure; whilst, to the Relieving Officers is entrusted an almost discretionary power of recommending distressed objects, or at least of seconding their application. The masters of the various Houses are undoubtedly persons of known character: in some cases retired non-commissioned officers, who, however qualified, from their own habits of discipline, to enforce submission, are not altogether, it would seem, the best adapted to govern such heterogeneous dispositions as come under their care. They are, moreover, restricted from making any distinction in their treatment of the poor, except in regard to the power of punishing the more refractory; a power which, considering the natural infirmities of all men, and the particular trials to which the temper of these must be subjected, is confessedly *liable* to abuse.

“The Surgeons and Chaplains now claim our attention; and here, indeed, the framers of the law have exhibited a praiseworthy, but I do not imagine judicious, study of economy. The situations are advertised, so as to admit of competition, the stipends fixed, and the duties plainly laid down. Hence, as no one is required to undertake either of the places, except of his own free will, this provision appears excellent to those who look no deeper than the surface. Here again, let us appeal to facts. Respectable Surgeons, who reside in the immediate neighbourhood of Unions, must either accept the post with a feeling that they lower themselves by assenting to terms which they know to be *inadequate* to the proper discharge of their duties; or else they must submit to the introduction of a stranger, who, it is possible, may not so much regard the actual amount of income, as the opportunity of establishing himself. An inducement is thus held out for unemployed, and, it may be, inexperienced



practitioners, to come forward ; but it would seem that the latter quality need not operate to the disfavour of any one ; since, whatever may be the nature of the complaint, or condition of the patient, no surgeon is allowed to make an alteration from the prescribed diet, unless by special orders from the Council of Three. Think of this, ye wealthy hypochondriacs, whose every fantastic wish is repended to by your medical attendant, with the assurance that your regimen disagrees with you, and that change of diet is absolutely essential to health.

“ But religious instruction likewise is judged expedient ; and, if we are to reckon its utility by the value attached to services in this department, we shall find it regarded as the lowest in the descending scale. I will not dwell on the fact that the framers of this Bill are the same persons who have been most diligent in their abuse of the church, and most solicitous to disburthen it of what they are pleased to term its overgrown wealth. They certainly act in consistence with their avowed principles, when they allow such a salary as £24 per annum to the Chaplain of a Union comprising forty-two parishes. The most devoted admirer of the Bill can scarcely suppose that this offer could tempt any one holding the rank of Clergyman of the Church of England, to undertake the responsible duties annexed to it, merely for what he can gain ; we may, therefore, look upon it as granted, that a higher motive of *some kind* must animate him. Those who have been in the habit of visiting the poor in their own homes—especially in manufacturing districts, where employment fluctuates, and where the report of some extensive failure, or the rumour of some foreign misunderstanding, is sufficient to stop the work of half-a-parish, and reduce its people suddenly to want—may be admitted to know what poverty means, and to be acquainted with some of its desolating effects. Every minister, indeed, in the exercise of his parochial duties, must be compelled to witness sufferings and distress ; and, if his feelings are often shocked by individual scenes, of what material must his heart be composed, if he can behold unmoved the *congregated* misery which the Union work-houses present ? Surely, in order to be useful in his vocation, he needs some more animating encouragement than the prospect of receiving his quarter's salary when it shall become due ; surrounded,

as he is, by objects good and ill, thrown together without discrimination ; exposed to much that, to say the least, offends his good taste ; and at times breathing an atmosphere in which it is difficult to decide whether physical or moral infection most prevails. If he displays an interest in behalf of his humble auditors, he soon becomes the depository of many a tale of real suffering, and in return can only bid them bear their trials patiently ; for should he at length be driven, by a sense of duty, to call attention to some case of hardship which stands pre-eminent above the many that he knows, the chances are, nay *the fact is*, that he receives a note from the Secretary of the Central Board, censuring his interference with what does not concern him ; referring him to his duties as set forth in the book of regulations ; and intimating that, if he is dissatisfied, his resignation will be accepted. Upon this, his feelings are excited, an angry correspondence succeeds, threats and recriminations are interchanged, public interest becomes awakened, and an investigation is demanded. How is it conducted ? Not in the fair, old, honest way—not in accordance with the system which used to be considered the safeguard of our rights, trial by jury (this is no clap-trap), but by a novel, unconstitutional method of proceeding. An Assistant-Commissioner arrives, invested with inquisitorial powers, into whose presence the trembling, and certainly *not free*, witnesses are summoned ; the case is stated ; and followed by a cross examination, the object of which is, to defend the system quite as much as to elicit truth. A report is drawn up and submitted to the higher authorities ; and soon after, or possibly, just as the recollection of the circumstances is dying away, an official document is published ; conveying, at times, in rather vague language, an expression of regret at the *supposed abuse* (for such every evil consequence of the Bill is represented to be), a reprimand to the offending parties, and a caution to be more careful for the future. Thus the affair terminates : the clerical or medical informer (for in this light he is viewed) retires in disgust, subject to the odium of being thought a busy, meddling person : nine-tenths of the world consider that he has failed in his proofs, or that the case is a solitary one ; and his successor takes office with a full determination not to involve himself in similar trouble, and, whatever his own convictions may be, to

avoid offending any of the Boards.”—*Ibid.*

“The successful operation of the system in some parts of England is triumphantly appealed to by its supporters; but it seems by no means difficult to prove that this arises, not from any inherent good principles; but because there exists in those places a strong *counteracting* influence, which exempts them from being entirely under the dominion of the Poor-Law. It works well in Bedfordshire; but the state of Nottinghamshire presents a fearful contrast: and a brief examination will suffice to show the cause. In all agricultural districts a strong *mutual dependence* upon each other subsists between owners, occupiers, and cultivators of the soil; no labourer of good character need ever dread compulsion into the workhouse; it is the interest of those above him to give him a fair remuneration for his services; to keep him in regular employment; and even to devise methods of ensuring it.”—*Ibid.*

“The labouring people in this country have been for some years suffering great distress and poverty. Work has been scarce, and wages have been low. If the idle and dissolute had been the only sufferers this would have been no more than is always to be expected, for there is a natural connexion between idleness and poverty. But the industrious and well-disposed have too often been in want, or have been compelled to work for wages which would not fairly support their families. How is this to be accounted for? One reason is, that a great many people who had parish allowances, and who could therefore do very well with low wages, have been employed to do the work of the farmers and others: of course they could afford to work under price. ‘I have a job for you that will last you till harvest,’ said Mr. Hobson, to two of his men, as they were coming down the ladder after helping to top-up the haystack. ‘What is that, Sir?’ said the men. ‘To let off the water from the pond in the stack-yard, and throw out the mud. What must I give you a-week?’ ‘Nine shillings is what we have always had, Sir.’ ‘Oh, no; I shall give no such price; I can get two men who will work readily for a shilling a-day—Jem Collins and Tom Hasler.’ ‘Yes, Sir, and well they may; for they are allowed three shillings and sixpence a-week each, by the parish—one because his eye-sight

is bad, the other because he has a wooden leg. A shilling a-day, and three shillings and sixpence a-week, make more than nine shillings together.’ I know nothing about bad eye-sight, or wooden legs,’ said the farmer; ‘all I know is that, with now and then an extra pint of beer, I can get almost as much work out of them as out of others; and, to cut the matter short, if you like the job at seven shillings a-week, you may do it; if not, Collins and Hasler are the men for me.’ Well, the two men did not know where to go for a better berth; they thought it very likely that if they tried another master, some of the parish paupers would be offering to work for him, under price, in the same way; and so they agreed to the seven shillings. No doubt the work was well worth nine, but what could they do? it was literally Hobson’s choice—that or none. Now who was to be blamed for all this? Who was to be blamed because these two men could only get seven shillings for nine shillings’ worth of work? Not the farmer, certainly. Nobody could blame him for getting his work done as cheaply as he could, particularly as he had so much money to pay for poor-rates. Not the two parish paupers. Nobody could blame them for earning six shillings, if they could, in addition to their three shillings and sixpence. Certainly not. Who then was to be blamed? The law to be sure; the law which allowed the parish to give to the crippled and infirm men so miserable a sum as three shillings and sixpence a-week, so that they could not possibly maintain their families without robbing the able-bodied and independent men of the work they ought to have had. The law was to be blamed, and the law only; and for this very reason the law has been altered. By the new law the parish must maintain the man who is crippled or disabled, and maintain him wholly. While he is able to support his family by his labour let him do it; and when sickness or infirmity overtakes him, the parish will support him and his family too. But while the parish supports him, the farmer is not to have his labour; this belongs, if it is worth anything, to the parish which feeds and clothes him and his children. And while the parish does this, he is not to be receiving from the farmer the wages of labour; these are the birthright of the able and hard-working man, who fairly and thankfully gives the sweat of his brow to the master who pays him.”—*The*



*whole History and Mystery of the New Poor-Law,"* 1840. (A Somerset-house 'Dilly, dilly; come and be killed!')

"Some people think that all the paupers, that is, all the men and women who cannot wholly maintain themselves, ought to live in the workhouse. No doubt it would be better for the labouring classes in general if they did, because then it would be certain they could not be taking away the work from other people, and so taking the bread out of other people's mouths; but at present there are not workhouses large enough to hold them all, so that this part of the new plan will be only gradually adopted. Larger workhouses will, by degrees, be built, and labouring people will be very much to blame if they do not lay by something while they are in full work and in good health, that they may not be without a shilling in case of an accident or sickness, so as to keep out of the workhouse."—*Ibid.*

"One thing at least will now be taken care of—that when there are more men in a place than can find work,—good, able-bodied men, willing to work if they could find employers, and when such men are compelled to seek parish relief, they will not be allowed to hang about doing many jobs for little or nothing, and thus themselves preventing the work, so to speak, from accumulating, or getting together, on the farmers' hands. No; there will be no more of this. If such men come upon the parish it is only fair and right that they should make themselves useful, as far as may be, to the parish. Whatever work they do will be done on the premises of the parish which maintains them, and not on the premises of the farmer or tradesman who does not maintain them. And, at the same time, the work they do will be as much as possible of a kind not to interfere with the work of other people; not to take away the employment from other men. The parish will not in general employ them in cultivating land, because, if it does, there will be so much less land for other labourers to be employed in cultivating; neither will it employ them or their children in handicraft manufactories, because, if it does, there will be so much less demand for the labour of men or children in other people's manufactories. They will be employed as much as possible in doing work which would not otherwise be done by men's labour at all, such as grinding corn in handmills, which

would otherwise be ground by water, or wind, or steam. While they are thus employed, the work will be getting ready again for them out of doors, and when the farmer wants it done, he will be willing to pay them fairly for doing it. But, after all, it seems extremely doubtful, whether there are more men in this country than are really wanted. In Lancashire, and Cheshire, and other counties, where large manufactories are carried on, there are not nearly people enough to do the work; and some of the most respectable men there would now willingly engage to find employment for large families from other parts of the country. They give high wages to boys and girls, so that the larger a man's family the better off he would be. A man with five or six children may readily obtain from twenty to thirty shillings a-week."—*Ibid.*

"It used often to be said that the most deserving of the poor people, being modest and quiet, were less frequently relieved by the parish than the noisy and turbulent. The overseers of country parishes were often men easily deceived and even frightened by the impudent bluster of idle and worthless vagabonds. All this will now be remedied. Noise and turbulence will be of no use now. It will be difficult to deceive the Board of Guardians, and still more difficult to frighten them. Every case will be calmly and deliberately inquired into, and decided by general rules; and the decision will be strictly adhered to. Large families were things that used terribly to frighten the parishioners, and they often did what was unjust to the poor in general, in order to keep men with six or eight children off the parish. But no one will be frightened at large families now. There will be plenty of room in the workhouses for men who may unfortunately be out of work for a time; and whether they have two children or ten will be of very little consequence to any one. The beds in the workhouse will be better for having people to sleep in them; and every one who knows what it is to provide food for two hundred or three hundred people, knows that when you come to such numbers, half-a-dozen, more or less, is hardly perceived; so that no one will be frightened, and no one will be out of humour, because a man has a large family."—*Ibid.*

"By the new law the most complete provision is made for attending to the wants of the destitute poor. The overseers used generally to be men who had business of their own to attend to, and

could not spare time fully to inquire into all the cases; but now the relieving officers are paid for doing nothing besides; and therefore devote their whole time to the service of the poor. It is not easy to tell of what benefit this will be. The poor people in two or three parishes in Cambridgeshire can tell something about it. When the new law first came into work, some of them were so very absurd (?) as to abuse the relieving officer, when he came to bring them their money: they pelted him with stones and otherwise ill-treated him. So the next week the Board ordered the officer not to go to those parishes at all; if the people did not like to have their money brought to them, they were welcome to come and fetch it. They might come to the market-town where the Board sat, if they chose to have any relief; if not, they might go without. The consequence was, that the poor old people who were stiff in their joints, and the younger people who had bad legs, and the women who had children to look after, were all obliged to walk over to the Board, four or five miles off, for their money; and many an aching limb was there, and many a sorrowful face, and heartily they repented having ill-used the man who went to carry them their money, and faithfully they promised that if he would but come back again, no one should be suffered to hurt him."—*Ibid.*

"When the new law first came out, many people thought it would be hard upon the poor. But these people were evidently mistaken. Whatever hardship there may at first arise out of it, it is clear it will not fall on the industrious poor. The parishioners who pay to the rates, may perhaps have some large sums of money to raise, in order to provide proper places to shelter the destitute poor, and large sums will have to be paid to the various officers connected with the different Unions, as they are called. These payments may possibly be felt somewhat heavy at first, although they will no doubt, produce great benefit afterwards. But to the industrious poor, who really are willing to work, there can be no doubt the new law will prove the greatest benefit they could possibly receive. If anybody doubts this, we have only one piece of advice to give him—WAIT AND SEE."—*Ibid.*

"A Board of entirely new Guardians was recently elected for the Union of this town (Nottingham.) Yesterday they went through the workhouse with the

workhouse authorities, and asked the miserable inmates of it whether they were satisfied with the treatment which they received. They one and all replied in the affirmative. It struck one of the Guardians, however, that the poor wretches were acting under *coercion*, and he desired the workhouse authorities to withdraw. They withdrew accordingly, and immediately afterwards the poor creatures flocked around the Guardians, and detailed various acts of severity which had been committed towards them. They will, of course, be made the subject of inquiry."—*Times*, April 21, 1841.

"My thoughts turned on 'a fine old English gentleman,' but *not* 'of the olden time,' whose rental is far heavier than was his honoured father's, who once met two little children in the road. *He* was seated in his carriage, and *they* were gathering acorns for their fathers' hogs! The 'squire was a great friend of the accursed New Poor-Law,—he ordered his coachman to 'pull up.' He then actually stole the acorns from the children and drove home with that plunder in his carriage! He afterwards threatened to discharge their fathers, who happened to be his labourers! He stopped the usual allowance of soup from his kitchen, and it required the intercession of his amiable daughter to set matters right."—*Oastler's "Fleet Papers,"* No. 17.

"The minister of the Gospel, whose duties lie within the precincts of a jail, may venture to address his auditors upon the evil consequences of crime, and the advantages of honesty; and prove to them, from their own position, and independently of higher arguments, that the sword of justice is not entrusted to the secular arm in vain. But in the chapel of a Union, he finds a labour far more arduous: his discourses cannot be adapted to the inmates *as a body*; his power of appeal to conscience is removed; his feelings are shocked; his sense of moral right and wrong confused; until at last he begins to doubt lest the prayers, the praises, and thanksgiving, which he offers in such a place be aught but mockery."—"A Voice from Scotland; or, The English Poor-Law Considered," by the Rev. J. V. Austin.

"He was one of those who believed that the Act of 1834 was one of the most beneficial measures ever adopted by Parliament, and for which he considered that the able Commissioners by whom it was recommended, and the Government which had the moral courage to propose it, were



equally entitled to the gratitude of the country.”—*Lord Howick, House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

“On the 11th of August, 1834, when Lord Althorp moved the Commons to agree to the Lords’ amendments,—an amendment was moved, that the amendments should be read a second time that day six months. This proposal was chiefly supported by those who were opposed to the Bill altogether, or who wished it should be at least delayed till next session; but Lord Althorp told them that, if the Bill did not pass that session, he would be a *bold man* who would try it in the next. The amendment was negatived by a large majority.”—*Annual Register*, 1834.

POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS’ ‘EVEN-HANDED JUSTICE.’—“The Poor-Law Commissioners were respectfully requested in the Bridgewater case to direct the inquiry to be an open one, and this they refused to do. They likewise refused to furnish a copy of the Assistant-Commissioner’s Report. Not satisfied with all this, their conduct in this black transaction has to be contemplated in a still darker aspect, if that be possible. Among the papers which were produced on Lord Wharncliffe’s motion, and ordered to be printed by the House, on the 11th of April, 1838, is a letter from Mr. Weale, marked ‘*private*’ to one of the Poor-Law Commissioners. This Assistant-Commissioner, who is directed to institute an inquiry into the horrors which have been detailed, thus writes to his official superior:—‘In what way would you advise me to conduct the inquiry? Would it not be desirable that I should request the attendance of the Guardians—a large majority of them are *favourable to us!*!’”—*Mr. Bowen’s Letter*, Feb. 11, 1841.

“The three kings of Somerset-house, one of whom has already found it an hereditary throne, are to have their powers prolonged nominally for ten years, but in reality to be perpetuated to the ‘crack of doom,’ and, by way of placing them on a bed of roses, all impediments to their future quiet are to be removed. Every Guardian of the poor who will not bow down to the gods whom the New Poor-Lawites have set up, nor kiss the firmans of the Poor-Law Sultans, is to be tongue-tied and bow-strung by an enactment that leaves the Poor-Law Molochs, like Robinson Crusoe, ‘the monarchs of all they survey.’ Every drop of the milk of human kindness which has hitherto sweetened the

bitter cup of affliction is to be denied to the unhappy, and they only whose hearts have hardened into stone are to be protectors of the destitute; to whom the Malthus clique have said that God has given them no place at nature’s feast, and who are, therefore, not permitted, like dogs, to pick up the crumbs that fall from the luxurious table of an over-paid Poor-Law Commissioner.”—*Mr. James Duncombe’s Address*, Feb. 10, 1841.

SIR ROBERT PEEL.—“It is painful to reflect, that in the most conspicuous points of his recent policy, he should have been found assisting the Whigs to do violence to the British constitution: at one time vindicating the legislative omnipotence of the House of Commons, asserting the superiority of privilege over law, and casting into prison patriotic magistrates, for refusing to violate their official oaths—at another, interposing his influence to prevent the triumph of public opinion over the New Poor-Law. It is sad to remember, but it cannot be dissembled, that the Poor-Law Commissioners owe their five years’ respite entirely to Sir Robert Peel. .... We believe that an immense majority of Conservatives regard the present Poor-Law as impolitic, unjust, uncharitable, and unchristian. If we are right in this belief, the Poor-Law is a rock upon which any statesman, who reckons upon their support without adopting their views, must ultimately split. We hope for much better things from Sir Robert Peel; but if we must either acquiesce in the New Poor-Law or abandon him, we cannot long hesitate which alternative to choose.”—*Times*, April 23, 1841.

“It is broadly asserted by many, that every man who endeavours to find work may find it. Were this assertion capable of being verified, there still would remain a question, what kind of work, and how far may the labourer be fit for it? For if sedentary work is to be exchanged for standing; and some light and nice exercise of the fingers, to which an artisan has been accustomed all his life, for severe labour of the arms, the best efforts would turn to little account, and occasion would be given for the unthinking and unfeeling unwarrantably to reproach those who are put upon such employment, as idle, forward, and unworthy of relief, either by law or in any other way! Were this statement correct, there would indeed be an end to the argument; the principle here maintained would be superseded. But, alas! it is far otherwise. That prin-

ciple, applicable to the benefit of all countries, is indispensable for England, upon whose coast families are perpetually deprived of their support by shipwreck; and where large masses of men are so liable to be thrown out of their ordinary means of gaining bread, by changes in commercial intercourse, subject mainly or solely to the will of foreign powers: by new discoveries in arts and manufactures, and by reckless laws, in conformity with theories of political economy, which, whether right or wrong in the abstract, have proved a scourge to tens of thousands, by the abruptness with which they have been carried into practice." — *Wordsworth's Postscript to Moron's Edition of his Poetical Works*, published in 1837.

"With all due deference to the particular experience and general intelligence of the individuals who framed the Act, and of those who in and out of Parliament have approved of and supported it, it may be said, that it proceeds too much upon the presumption that it is a labouring man's own fault if he be not, as the phrase is, beforehand with the world. But the most prudent are liable to be thrown back by sickness, cutting them off from labour, and causing to them expense: and who but has observed how distress creeps upon multitudes without misconduct of their own, and merely from a gradual fall in the price of labour, without a corresponding one in the price of provisions; so that men who may have ventured upon the marriage state with a fair prospect of maintaining their families in comfort and happiness, see them reduced to a pittance which no effort of theirs can increase? Let it be remembered also, that there are thousands with whom vicious habits of expense are not the cause why they do not store up their gains; but they are generous and kind-hearted, and ready to help their kindred and friends: moreover they have a faith in Providence that those who have been prompt to assist others, will not be left destitute, should they themselves come to need. By acting from these blended feelings, numbers have rendered themselves incapable of standing up against a sudden reverse. Nevertheless, these men, in common with all who have the misfortune to be in want, if many theorists had their wish, would be thrown upon those sharp points of condition, from which the intervention of law has hitherto saved them." — *Ibid.*

"The Chaplain of the Alderbury Union having been prevented by illness from

performing his duties, for some time past, the Earl of Radnor, who is Chairman of the Union, has, on several occasions, supplied his place by reading prayers to the inmates of the poor-house, and also reading to them a sermon by an approved author." — *Salisbury Journal*, Nov., 1839. (There's a holy lord for you! — G.R.W.B.)

HOO UNION. — "A paragraph recently appeared in the *Times*, announcing that Miles, the master of the Hoo Union workhouse, though said to have been dismissed by order of the Poor-Law Commissioners, was still retained in that situation, has had the effect, not only of shaming the Board of Guardians into the appointment of a new master, but of rousing the Home-office authorities from their lethargy. The justices at Rochester having held Miles to bail to answer the charges made against him at the assizes, forwarded the depositions to the Marquis of Normanby, and only last week, the assizes in the interval having been suffered to elapse, the magistrates received the following very curious communication, dated April 17, from Mr. Vizard, the solicitor to the Home-office: — 'Your letter of Feb. 9 last, addressed to the Marquis of Normanby, with a complaint against James Miles, the master of the Hoo Union workhouse, was, with its accompanying papers, submitted first to the Poor-Law Commissioners, and subsequently to the Attorney and Solicitor-General, who advised that an indictment should be preferred against Miles. I see it stated, however, by the public papers, that another master is to be elected by the Guardians on the 29th inst., from which I conclude that Miles has been dismissed. I have to request you will be pleased to inform me whether such is the fact, and whether the magistrates, who were before desirous of having a prosecution instituted, entertain still the same opinion, that I may be enabled to take the further directions of the Attorney and Solicitor-General upon the altered circumstances of the case.' A very full meeting of the justices, on Wednesday last, directed Mr. Essell, the clerk of the court, to inform Mr. Vizard, that they had no official intimation of the dismissal of Miles, other than the order of the Poor-Law Commissioners, dated the 28th of January last; that it was notorious he was still continued as master and relieving officer, or was so only a few days ago; that an advertisement had appeared for a successor, whose duties were to commence on the 6th of May next, and that the justices



knew of no circumstances to alter their opinion of the propriety of his being indicted on the charges which induced them to hold the accused to bail. The trickery resorted to in this case for the purpose of screening an acknowledged delinquent, is disgusting and contemptible in the extreme."—*Times*, April 27, 1841.

"The hon. gentleman (Mr. Larport) in his speech at the Exchange-hall told them that he was a member of the Council of the London University, 'the object of which is, to withdraw from the trammels of bigotry the classes which did not belong to the Established Church; his views on education, therefore, were liberal, and he felt strongly that to educate the mind of man is to raise and elevate him.' Now he (Mr. Walter) was as great a friend to educating the poor as his hon. friend could be; but still, let them not put the cart before the horse; let them look to their feeding and clothing first, and then give them whatever education their minds were capable of receiving. (Cheers.) To this effect he recollected a passage in a speech of an eminent and learned judge, who said, 'I do not expect any immediate benefit from any of the plans which have been suggested for the education of the poor. It is in vain to attempt to improve their minds if you neglect their bodies. Where have you ever known of a people desirous of education who had not clothes to cover them, or bread to eat? I have never known such a people capable of receiving moral instruction.' (Great cheering.)"—*Mr. Walter, at the Nomination, Nottingham Election*, April 26, 1841.

"He was charged with change of principles, and how did his opponent prove that charge? By quoting the expressions of other people, with whom he had nothing to do. He defied them to prove any contradiction of his during the whole course of his public life. (Cheers.) He could conceive nothing more absurd and ridiculous than for a public man to be always changing his opinion. (Cheers and laughter.) The Reformer of this day reforming what he was yesterday; there was no end of such reformation. His opponent called himself a Reformer; he (Mr. Walter) had seen and contemplated the whole brood of Reformers, and was sick of them and their practices. (Cheers.) Let the meeting listen to the opinions of three of them as a specimen, and from that sample let them judge of the whole sack. (Cheers and laughter.) 'The poor no longer strive,' said Lord Brougham,

'for the means of maintaining their children, but heedlessly, recklessly count upon that fund, out of which, whether in sickness or in health, in youth or in age, in impotence or in vigour, they know that they may claim the means of support.' 'If an Englishman,' said Lord John Russell, 'receives from £4 to £5 at once, it generally happens that the sum is all but lost to him, from being expended, in the course of two or three days, in dissipation and debauchery.' (Cries of 'Shame.') His Lordship, he supposed, was speaking from his family experience in the corruption of elections: for so long back as the time of Junius, the Russells were accused of having, in the way of traffic, bought and sold more than half the representative integrity of the nation. ('Hear, hear,' and cheers.) Then, again, Lord Melbourne used this language:—"I would recommend to the Commissioners, as a general rule, that not only should not the inmates of a workhouse be allowed to go out on Sunday, but that they should not be allowed to go out at all." ('Shame, shame.') Were these the principles of those great and illustrious Whigs, Fox and Whitbread, whose names were even yet the rallying cry of their party, and who were emphatically called the 'friends of the people?' He was sure that they were not: and could they be surprised when they found him deserting the Whigs, when the Whigs had themselves deserted their ancient principles? (Cheers.) The end of them would be, that the Whigs would leave nothing in the world certain and fixed but their own places. (Cheers.) The only reform that was of the least value to the poor man, was that which the present Ministers would not give—full stomachs and unoppressive labour; but, instead of that, starving dietaries and stone walls. (Immense cheering.) The people asked for bread, which they have a right to have, and they gave them a stone (cheers); they asked for fish, and in lieu thereof they gave them, not one serpent, but three. (Cheers, and loud cries of 'No Serpent!' 'No Parlevous!' and a cry, 'There's a sting in that Serpent!') It was the hope of defeating the New Poor-Law that had brought him there. (Great cheering.) The present contest would decide whether they were favourable or hostile to, what he should at least think, that most iniquitous law. (Cheers.) If they chose his antagonist, by that act they would defend and promote it as much as lay in their power. By the

preference of himself, they would assist in removing it, and in soothing that irritation which would continue so long as its oppressive provisions remained upon the Statute book. (Mr. Walter then resumed his place on the hustings, amidst great cheering.)"—*Ibid.*

"An elector then stood up from the crowd and said, that Mr. Larpent having on a recent occasion stated that the New Poor-Law had worked well, and that it had a tendency also to raise wages and better the condition of the industrious classes, he begged to put one or two questions, the better to test his principles on this most important subject. The first question he had to ask was, whether Mr. Larpent, in the event of his return for Nottingham, would pledge himself to use his vote and influence to abolish the Poor-Law Commission. (Cheers and confusion.)—Mr. Larpent at first positively refused to answer the question, which occasioned a new scene of turbulence and disorder. Ultimately, however, he declared (still evading the question) that if returned, he would do his utmost to carry the law into effect without harshness in his bearing on the poor. (Cries of 'Oh, oh,' groans and hisses.)"—*Ibid.*

"Among other instances of intimidation which have been resorted to within our knowledge, we may mention that no less than three extensive firms in the lace trade, one at Basford and the other two at Nottingham, have threatened their workmen with *immediate discharge* if they do not vote for Mr. Larpent. The poor fellows, who are considerable in number, had all promised to vote for Mr. Walter, and with tears in their eyes they have complained to Mr. Walter's committee, that they shall be constrained to vote against him, and thus to vote for the continuance of that iniquitous measure the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act, which they hold in the utmost hatred. We are in possession of the names of these *respectable firms*."—*Ibid.*

THE ARBITRARY POWERS OF THE COMMISSIONERS.—"A highly respectable gentleman, a county magistrate, attended a meeting which was held at Barnstaple, for the purpose of expressing their opinion with regard to the operation of the New Poor-Law. The gentleman to whom he alluded was called to the chair, and his presidency was the best assurance that the proceedings would be conducted with order and decorum. The House, he was assured, would hear with

astonishment, that this gentleman received a letter from an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner to appear before him on the following Monday; and he was further given to understand that he should be held guilty of a misdemeanor if he did not attend. He applied to have the assistance of a professional adviser, which application was refused, and he was held from the Monday to the Wednesday under an ordeal of question and cross-question, and ultimately an affidavit as to the truth of the statement which he had made at the meeting was required of him."—*Mr. Bucke, House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1841.*

SOMERSET-HOUSE PERSECUTION.—"In the case of James Lisney, he (Mr. Wakley) had felt it his duty to take the evidence of the paupers of the house. Upon the first or second occasion, one of the poor women was examined. On the third occasion, he found that her condition in the workhouse was affected by the evidence she had given. Good God! what might he be bringing on that unfortunate woman at the present moment! And where was her redress for any injury which they might choose to inflict on her? That poor woman—he trembled while making the statement—said, that some assistance which she had before received was taken from her in consequence of giving this evidence, that her condition was rendered extremely uncomfortable, and that she was most desirous of leaving the workhouse."—*House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1841.*

THE POST OF HONOUR.—"Such a revolution in public opinion with respect to the office of Guardian has taken place, that the competition is now, not who shall fill the office, but who shall escape it, and the members of the several Boards are now generally elected without a competition."—*Sherborne Journal, April 4, 1840.*

"At the first meeting of the Board of Guardians in Clare, the room resounded with defiance and point blank contradictions, in the most unreserved terms."—*Champion, Sept. 22, 1839.*

HUMANITY A SOMERSET-HOUSE CRIME.—"At a meeting of the Haverfordwest Board of Guardians, held on Tuesday last, for the election of a master of the workhouse, instead of Mr. Francis Lemon, whose appointment has been attempted to be cancelled, one of the grounds urged by one of the Guardians opposed to him was, *his humane feelings*—it being one of the principles of the



establishment not to render it so comfortable to parties to go in and remain there. But this mode of reasoning failed in its effect, as the whole of the Guardians unanimously resolved to reappoint him."—*Cardmarthen Journal*, March 20, 1840.

"We regret to see the *Morning Post*, now at once flying off to the doctrine of expediency and political convenience, and endeavouring to show that the Conservatives in Parliament, though they have the power to defeat the renewed Poor-Law, are not bound to do so, but rather to yield to the ministry, as heretofore, sufficient support to enable them to carry the Bill. We may venture to promise them this—that, should Whigs and Tories thus be found in union for such a purpose, and a dissolution of Parliament become inevitable, as it not improbably may, before Midsummer, the effect would be, that a good many, both of Whigs and Tories, would lose their seats, and be replaced by men who were neither the one nor the other! But it is said that the matter must be viewed practically; that the Old Law is to all intents and purposes defunct, and cannot be resuscitated; that the former parish workhouses are already pulled down or sold, and new Union houses erected in their room; and that to undo all that has been done would be little else than to repeat a revolution within seven years. Now, the whole of this we at once and frankly admit. But it goes merely to the circumstantial, and not to the principle of the New Poor-Law. The new Union workhouses are not so bad but that under Christian and humane management they might be made abodes of peace and comfort for the worn-out widow or invalid labourer, and at the same time of reformation for the idle and refractory. All this is matter of detail; the chief faults of the New Poor-Law are found in its broad and fundamental principles. The *absolute power*, for instance, grasped by the Somerset-house triumvirate, alike over ill-managed and well-managed parishes, is most revolting to English feelings. Why should a district which has committed no fault, and whose management of its poor has been neither wasteful nor harsh—why should such a parish be utterly and for ever disfranchised, and deprived of all self-government, merely because some other parishes, in a distant part of the kingdom, are 'reported' to have been too lavish in their expenditure? The chief thing for which we would contend—and we know that we

shall have nineteen-twentieths of the people on our side—is, that where no offence, no misconduct has been proved, there the inhabitants of every district should be held competent to manage their own affairs. And, observe, we can never admit that a kind and liberal treatment of the poor shall be taken to be 'mismanagement.' If a wealthy parish, not overburdened with poor, and having a good opinion of the inmates of its workhouse, chooses to afford them the comforts of a little table beer, or tea and sugar, we utterly deny that any case is thereby made out for foreign interference, or for a peremptory decree from Somerset-house, confining all parties to a weak dilution of water-gruel. In like manner, to proceed with the same parish, for we have a real case in our eye:—The overseers under the Old Poor-Law had sometimes thought it not too much to allow a poor broken-down widow of 70, who strove to keep herself out of the workhouse as long as possible, as much as 3s. or 3s. 6d., a-week, which barely paid her lodging. Under the new system, the utmost stretch of charity is conceived to lie in giving *any* out-door relief at all; and when the concession is made it is held that 1s. or 1s. 6d. a-week is the very utmost that can be permitted. The consequence is, that the poor creature totters about heartbroken and half-starved, and the parish saves 2s. a-week *contrary to its own unanimous wish and prayer*. These are the leading features of the working of the New Poor-Law; and what is most to be desired is, to restore to parishes sufficiently populous to manage their own affairs with public spirit some share in the charge and disposition of their distressed poor. This, at least, ought to be attempted at once; and even with such alterations as these, the experimental Bill should only continue in force for one, or at most for two years."—*Times*, May 1, 1841.

"Mr. B. Wood presented a petition from the parish of St. George, Southwark, in *favour* of the present Bill, and stating the belief of the petitioners, that if the controlling powers of the Commissioners were removed, all the maladministration of the old system would return; that if the power to carry out the law were vested in the Guardians, great fluctuations would result; that a unity of design was secured by a central controlling power, and that they approved of the system of education adopted in the Bill."—*House of Commons*, March 19, 1841.

"Mr. Round presented a petition from the Parish of Dunmow, in Essex, *praying that the Poor-Law Commissioners may be continued for a further term of five years (! ! !)*"—*House of Commons*, March 18, 1841.

"Mr. Bolton Clive moved that the petition from the Chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Hereford Union,\* in support of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act (presented the 9th of March) be printed with the votes, which motion was adopted."—*House of Commons*, March 11, 1841.

"Sir R. Inglis presented a petition from the clergy and inhabitants of a parish in Salop, in favour of the New Poor-Law."—*Ibid*, March 19, 1841.

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"To us, we confess (while it is a matter of some psychological curiosity to watch so remarkable a tenacity of official life under the most trying circumstances), it is a question of little practical interest who may dispense the patronage and pocket the emoluments of Downing-street, so long as the country clearly understands where the real responsibility of Government must henceforth reside. For the disbursement of the public money, for the preservation of the public peace, and for the performance of other merely executive acts, the holders of office, however powerless in the Legislature, must of course be answerable, so long as the executive authority is in their hands. But it would be ridiculous, not to say unjust, to regard the principal share of *legislative* responsibility as attaching to men who are opposed by majorities in both Houses of Parliament. Common sense declares, that those who have the power of carrying salutary measures through Parliament, and of rejecting pernicious measures, are answerable to their country for the use they make, or neglect to make, of that power. This is now the posture of the Conservative opposition:—Supported by an overwhelming majority in the House of Lords, and by a varying, yet sufficient majority in the House of Commons, they cannot decline the duties inseparably annexed to their position. Whether they assume the seals of office or not, it has become their duty, at all events, to take the lead in legislation.

"It will not be sufficient to have defeated Lord Morpeth's Irish Registration Bill;

they must vigorously press forward, and carry their own. And upon the Poor-Law Continuance Bill, as we hinted on Wednesday, they must be prepared, if they would give any satisfaction to the country, to take a far bolder and more decided course than might have been required of them under different circumstances. Without their fiat, it is impossible for that measure ever to become law;—will they dare to pronounce that fiat now, after what has taken place at Nottingham?

"Let not any one suppose that responsibility upon this question can be evaded upon the plea that we must have *some* Poor-Law, and that the rejection of the ministerial bill, without substituting another, would either throw us into a state of inextricable confusion, or oblige us to fall back upon the old law and its abuses. We are not so unreasonable as to desire that any step should be taken which, by any possibility, can tend to confusion; nor do we wish for the introduction of any precipitate and ill-digested measure upon a subject of such vast importance. It may be necessary to take time; and while the final settlement of this question upon Christian principles is under consideration, it may also be necessary to suffer, with some modifications, even the continuance of the present system. But a bill of four or five clauses, which the Conservatives could not fail to carry, would be perfectly sufficient for this purpose; and while it is in their power to resort to so easy and so unexceptionable an alternative, there can be no possible excuse for fastening upon the country, FOR FIVE YEARS, and with augmented powers, the intolerable despotism of Somerset-house. We cannot sufficiently impress upon our readers, that if the Poor-Law Continuance Bill should pass the House of Commons, in the present position of parties, Sir R. Peel will be as completely responsible for it as if he were actually First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

"Lord John Russell has postponed for a week longer the further consideration of this measure. We trust advantage will be taken of the interval by those whom it most concerns, to weigh the effects of any irresolution upon this subject, and much more of any resolution which may fail to satisfy the just expectations of the country. Who can tell how soon a general election may take place? And, after the lesson of Nottingham, who can doubt the critical

\* *Vide* Part I. of this work, where a copy of the petition is given.—G. R. W. B.



influence which the deliberations of the coming week may have, not upon that general election only, but upon the ultimate destinies of England? Mr. Walter is the first Anti-Poor-Law member, emphatically so called, who has ever taken his seat in the House of Commons; but assuredly he will not be the last. Of the great movement on behalf of the rights of the poor commenced at Nottingham, it is now in the power of the Conservative party to take the lead; in that event, unbounded popularity and triumphant success await them and their principles; if they do not, others will. History has applauded that king of England who quelled a formidable insurrection by placing himself at the head of the insurgents; and why? Not merely for the personal courage, not merely for the manly prudence, which the act displayed, but for higher and deeper reasons. There was a moral meaning and propriety in the proceeding. To protect the poorest of his people, to redress their wrongs, to acquaint himself with their grievances, to save them from the temptation to acts of violence by kindness, and sympathy, and justice, was his peculiar place and duty: he was their natural and legitimate leader. The event proved, that he needed only to seek their confidence in order to obtain it—only to promise them justice, in order to quell their lawless and irregular efforts to right themselves. Surely it is no less the duty of Conservatives now—representing (as they believe themselves to represent) all that is most noble, most honourable, most exalted, in our social constitution—identifying (as they have ever identified) themselves with the cause of religion, charity, and virtue—surely it is as much their duty and their policy to come forward as the friends, the counsellors, and the champions of the working classes, as it ever was that of an English king. The more disposition those classes discover to go astray for want of proper direction, the more imperative does this duty become; and with the proof that recent events have given us of their willingness, even when deeply tainted with disorganizing principles, to place confidence in men who deserve it, we cannot imagine anything short of judicial blindness which can induce the Conservative leaders to shrink from the performance of this most honourable, though certainly most responsible and arduous function.”—*Times*, April 30, 1841.

“The Guardians of the Dorchester Union Bastile, with the view to economy, have threatened the Governor of the workhouse with dismissal, unless he daily collect the bones, and wash! and dispose of them for the benefit of the Union! A woman, acting as cook in the establishment, had claimed them as her perquisites, and sold them for the enormous sum of sixpence a-week! But this immense saving is nothing compared to what we are about to state. The girls, it appears, were in the habit of collecting the contents of certain vessels, which they sold to the neighbouring hosier. This duty is now imposed upon the master, who is to dispose of it, and pay the money over to the treasurer!”—*Weekly Dispatch*, Feb. 4, 1838.

“The clerk of a Poor-Law Union in Berkshire advertizes for a parish school-master, at the splendid salary of £15 a-year, and provisions from the workhouse supplies. It is added, that ‘none need apply who has not a competent knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic!’”—*Northern Star*, Dec. 29, 1838.

“The Poor-Law Commissioners have refused to allow the sum of £15 expenses incurred by the overseers of the parish of Thurlestone, Kingsbridge Union, in this county, in prosecuting a woman for concealing the birth of her child; and at the meeting of the Guardians on the 15th ult., it was stated an application for the allowance had been made to the county, and also refused. It seems necessary, therefore, that it should now be determined by legislative enactment who shall be prosecutors in such cases, and in what manner the expenses shall be paid.—*Devonport Independent*. [Is the concealment in which the bastardy clauses operate the object which the Commissioners have in view?]”—*Weekly Dispatch*, Feb. 4, 1838.

Mr. W. L. Caswell, surgeon, of Hunts-hill, near Bridgewater, committed suicide on Saturday, from the following hard treatment received by him from the Board of Guardians of the Bridgewater Poor-Law Union. The unfortunate gentleman was employed by the Board to attend one division of the Union, as surgeon. After twelve months’ unremitting attention, the Board refused to pay him the sum of £90, the charge for his services, but offered him £50, which was refused. Mr. Caswell took legal proceedings against them, but as his family were expensive and his means small, he ultimately

took £40, each party paying their own costs. This treatment preyed on his mind, and the fear that the knowledge of his having accepted a sum so much below his original and very moderate demand might create an impression that his standing in the profession was lowered, so completely superseded every other reflection as to bring on insanity, labouring under which, he went under the sea walls, on Saturday morning, and nearly cut his head off with a razor. A Coroner's inquest was held on the body, and a verdict of temporary insanity was returned."—*Dorset County Chronicle*, May 26, 1838.

THE POOR - LAW COMMITTEE.—“What should they say with respect to the Parliamentary investigation which had been instituted? Every step that was taken when it was first moved showed the utmost anxiety to prevent all impartial inquiry. Would persons who desired to have elicited the truth have consigned the investigation to a packed committee? And that committee was proverbially so. It was his duty, previously to quitting it, to state before the House of Commons his motives for that step; and he wished that respectable company, and every one else who read their proceedings, to bear in mind that not one single statement or allegation which he had made was ever contradicted; whilst he was most cautiously prevented from going into the official reports of the Commissioners. To pass over various suppressions of proceedings which turned out differently from what the committee wished, and other matters of which he had complained at the time to the House, he would just mention one occurrence as a sample which must strike this assembly. One of the Assistant-Commissioners, in giving a history of the administration of the old law, with a view to prove the evil of the allowance system, stated, that the having a large family was so advantageous, *that a man had been known to beat his wife because she did not breed fast enough!* On being asked where so marvellous an occurrence took place, the committee, whose sagacity suspected what the result would be, overruled the question, on the plea that this superfætation man might be injured by exposure; and everything relative to the subject was erased from the minutes. He was not allowed to test the evidence. He believed that no man ever came into that committee-room who did not retire from it most painfully impressed with the

partiality of the proceedings.”—*Mr. Walter, Freemasons' Tavern Meeting*, June 24, 1839.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON.—“There can scarcely be a stronger confirmation of the mischief that arises from the interference of churchmen in politics, than the dreadfully zealous exertions of the Bishop of London, in promoting the passing of the impious Poor-Law Amendment-Bill, particularly by his incomprehensible enforcement of that iniquitous, cruel, murderous measure, the Bastardy Clause. Had he then been *God*, instead of being as he now is, a Christian Bishop, Satan would, on his having betrayed Eve, have probably escaped punishment, while all his vengeance would have been exhausted on his unsuspecting victim. So likewise had the Scribes and Pharisees of those days, brought the woman taken in adultery to the Bishop, instead of to Christ, for condemnation, their object would not have been defeated. The holy men would not have had (heart-smitten and conscience-struck) to have silently slunk away. Oh! well may the poor exclaim—‘May we fall into the hands of God, and not into the hands of men!’ Does the learned Bishop believe that the sacrament of Baptism is essential to salvation? If he does, what a fearful reflection must it be to him, if he ever should reflect on the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of newborn infants, who, unbaptized, have, by this murderous clause in the infernal Act, been hurried, by their own mothers, into eternity.”—“*The Paupers' Advocate*,” by *Samuel Roberts*.

MALTHUS.—“The Fellow of Jesus acknowledges that his fears of being starved out are not new ones, for that Plato and Aristotle, more than a thousand years ago, had entertained the same. But those fears of theirs are not yet realized! It may, then, be some consolation and ground of confidence to the desponding Malthusians to be informed, that there now is perhaps ten times more *known* land un— or nearly—unoccupied, than there was in those days.”—*Ibid*.

“The Commissioners said, in their first report, ‘The duty of supporting parents and children in old age or infirmity is so strongly enforced by our natural feelings, that it is often well performed even among savages, and almost always so in a nation deserving the name of civilized. We believe England is the only European country in which it is neglected.....  
...If the deficiencies of parental and



filial affection are to be supplied by the parish, and the natural motives to the exercise of those virtues are thus to be withdrawn, it may be proper to endeavour to replace them, however imperfectly, by artificial stimulants, and to make fines, distress-warrants, or imprisonment, act as substitutes for gratitude or love.' He quoted their words. How hard, indeed, it was, supposing such to be the fact, that the poor should have the feelings of nature forced out of them by want! It was painful for him to speak with the least appearance of disrespect of any member of the royal family, and most of all of an illustrious and well-meaning prince now no more; but did not a late royal personage receive no less a sum than £10,000 a-year from the public purse for attending on his suffering parent only one day in the week? Was it worse for a poor man or woman, who perhaps had a family to maintain, to receive a trifle for attending to a sick father or mother, than for a royal son to receive £10,000 a-year for the same, or even much less duty? He would willingly have omitted reference to such a subject, but he did not think he conscientiously could, without partially betraying that cause which lay nearest to his heart. Now if, as he believed to be the case, two of the gentlemen who had been prominent members of these Poor-Law Commissions, and who assisted, of course, in the composition of their report, did, as Members of Parliament, actually vote for the £10,000 a-year to the Duke of York, for the purpose just mentioned."

—*Mr. Walter's Speech at the Crown and Anchor, March 11, 1841.*

"His wish was to test the sincerity of the House with reference to the continuance of this Commission. Some hon. members, he found, were in the habit of saying that they were unfavourable to the continuance of the Commission beyond five years; others were unfavourable to the law. That being so, a great majority of members found means to vote for the Bill. But if the Bill were separated into two Bills, then the House would have an opportunity of seeing who were for an alteration of the law on the one hand, and, on the other, who were for continuing the Commission. Even if the House were determined that the Commission should continue for another five years, still, if they were prepared to act like public men, and with the spirit becoming members of the Legislature, they could not object to divide the Bill, so as to show on the same

side who those were who were willing that the present state of things should continue to exist, and, on the other, what the House meant should be the law of the land—not a shifting, vexatious law, but such a law as would let every person who was poor know what course he must take. It was remarkable that both the present Bill and the Act of the 6th and 7th of William IV. throughout contemplated, apparently, the permanent continuance of the present system of Poor-Law, and of the Commission. As for the present Bill, there was not a line of it, in any one place, on which a man could put his finger and say, 'This is a proof that it is not meant that this system shall continue longer than five years.' Now, he must say, that this was not dealing fairly with the House. If it were intended to continue the Commission longer, then the Government ought to say so in the Bill; but if it were intended to terminate at the end of five years, and that then the relief of the poor should be worked by the anciently constituted authorities of the country, let the House say so at once, and not persevere in this mode of acting, which he could not but call dealing treacherously with the public. Was the House afraid to take this course? He feared it was. (Hear.) He could not understand how the great landed proprietors in the House, with whom it was of course an object to live well with their neighbours, came to lend themselves—he had almost said meanly lend themselves—to this course. He told those gentlemen that this law was subverting the feelings of human nature in this country. He could not conceive how those gentlemen came to support this law, and yet promoted the education of the people. He told the House that it was impossible that this law and education could go on together. The people saw, or rather he ought to say the people were beginning to see, the real nature of this odious enactment; they were beginning to see, that it was an attempt to protect the wealth of this country at the expense of every feeling which Englishmen had been accustomed to revere; they were beginning to see that the aristocracy, for their own advantage, supported this law at the expense of human feeling and human happiness. But he could tell the aristocracy, that there was not a man of them who was not placing his property, and perhaps his life, in jeopardy, by adhering to this law. (Hear.)"—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*

**"PERSHORE POOR-LAW UNION.**—At a meeting of the Board of Guardians, held on Tuesday last, the presiding chairman, Mr. Annesley, informed the Board that Mr. Weale, Assistant-Commissioner, had paid a visit to the workhouse on Thursday previous, at an early hour in the morning; and that the Assistant-Commissioner had left word with the clerk, that he was unable to attend the Board, as he was taking a tour through his district to visit every workhouse, and that he begged to leave a resolution to be adopted by the Board, viz., 'That the medical officer be requested to attend at the workhouse of the Union daily.' Mr. Annesley observed, that sitting as chairman, he should make no motion on the subject, but he could not conceal from the Board his disapprobation of the character of Mr. Weale's unnecessary visit, and his disgust at such an interference with the officers of the Union. This might be a very pleasant season of the year for the itinerations of the Assistant-Commissioners, and he supposed that something was required to be done to make out a justification of travelling expenses. Mr. Weale had, therefore, examined the master of the workhouse upon the attention paid to that establishment by the medical officer, Mr. Claridge; and though he had been informed of the strict attention of that gentleman to his duties, and that the latter, or his assistant, had been in the habit of attending twice a-day upon any pauper who was unwell, yet, in order that some set-off should appear against his large salary and its large *et ceteras*, the Assistant-Commissioner had coolly left the Board the ungracious task of passing a resolution so uncalled for and unjustifiable, by which the labours of their medical officer would be unnecessarily increased. Having made this communication as their chairman for the time, and having declared his own opinion upon it, he should now leave the Board to deal with Mr. Weale's resolution as it deemed fit. The Rev. Dr. Grove moved, that the resolution be taken into consideration on that day six months, which was seconded and agreed to unanimously."—*Worcester Guardian*, Sept. 1, 1838.

**"A HINT TO POOR-LAW GUARDIANS.**—The three Poor-Law despots at Somerset-house have received a rebuff from the Guardians of the Yarmouth Union, which may serve as a model to similar functionaries when subjected to 'the insolence of office.' The latter had received a polite

intimation, that 'they had no discretion whatever as regards the mode of relief,' upon which they returned for answer, that as that was the case, the Commissioners 'might do the work of the Union themselves.' In the eye of common sense, of what earthly use can be the deliberations of the Guardians of the different Unions if they are not to determine on the best mode of administering relief, according to the varying circumstances of their peculiar districts? In assuming all power, the Commissioners may perchance find that they will have to perform all functions likewise; if they reserve all discretion to themselves, it is fit that they should have all the duty. In what way, we wonder, would the Commissioners propose to punish a Board of Guardians guilty of the enormity of opposing their overgrown authority."—*Sunday Times*, Dec. 16, 1838.

"As a minister of religion, I can speak gratefully of the difference of the workhouses under the old and new system of relief. Formerly, some miserable brick ruin, damp and deserted, because it had been deemed unfit for human habitation, was fitted up for the reception of the destitute. Here, upon a thin litter of straw, lay the paralytic, the lame, the blind; here crouched the idiot that subsisted upon garbage; here reposed the prisoners who for days rose not from their beds, because there was none to perform for them the offices of decency and humanity; the aged who had none to help them. The master entrusted with these sad burthens upon human life, had but one duty to perform—to diminish the poor-rate. The sighs and tears within those desolate walls fell not upon the public ear, nor touched the sympathies of the press; but many a victim of untold oppression, deserted by friends, unknown to the law and the law's pity, there perished by neglect. The Union-houses of the present day have been erected at the cost of many thousand pounds each, in such a manner as to provide for the essential comforts as well as for the reception of the destitute. They are built with especial reference to those who are to be their future inhabitants. There are apartments for the aged who dwell together—schools for children of both sexes—hospitals for the sick, with warm and cold baths, the first medical attendance; and a chapel for the holy services of religion. There is a weekly meeting of Guardians to examine into every department of the Union House.



The master is as amenable to these representatives of parishes as the humblest inmate; and as recent public inquiries have justly proved, it is impossible, from the number who visit the House from the different villages and towns, as well as from the inspection of the Guardians, that any wrong can be inflicted without discovery, or continued without appeal."—*"The New Poor-Law: Pour et Contre,"* by Clericus, 1841.

"When I first heard of this infernal concoction of the avaricious SOUL-PLEDGER (Brougham—oh! how much easier it is to *pledge* souls than to *redeem* them!) and had learned to comprehend in some measure (though but in part) its diabolical nature, I felt all the Christian, the Briton, and the man, aroused within me! I thought that the whole nation would indignantly arise as one man, and, if the insulters of God and their country were really in earnest in their proposal to rob and murder the *poor* for plunder—they would unite and hurl the impious traitors to God and their country from those high and important stations of which they had thereby proved themselves so utterly unworthy. Alas! alas! how horrible! how lamentable! that the painful experience of the last seven years has forced on the mind of every humane being, the conviction, that in this professedly Christian country—Mammon reigns in the hearts of more than nine-tenths of the rich adult male inhabitants triumphantly over the true God!"—*"The Paupers' Advocate,"* by Samuel Roberts, 1841.

"I will compare the characters, the talents, the conduct, the works, and the principles, of the statesmen who have *discarded* the good old Poor-Law of Elizabeth, with those of the *enactors* of that God-pleasing, country-blessing, legislative Act; an Act which then—let it be remembered—was an untried experiment, as holy in its conceptions, as it proved to be beneficial in its consequences. But there were *giant* legislators on the earth in those days! We now cannot find such as are even worthy of being called *men*. The Queen of those days would scarcely have intrusted them to carry her fan for her; perhaps she would have taken off their useless heads. Where among *them* shall we find the Bacons,—the Howards,—the Leicesters,—the Sidneys,—the Raleighs,—the Essexes,—or the Burleighs, of those days?"—*Ibid.*

"During the resumed discussion of the clauses of the Irish Poor-Law Bill on

Friday night, on Mr. O'Connell's remarking on the parts relating to vagrancy, Mr. Walker said, he thought the law ought to be very severe against *trading mendicants.*"—*Hereford County Press*, May 17, 1838.

THE CAT LET OUT OF THE BAG.—"The principle of the English Act was a most simple one—it was this, that no man should perish for want, and that there should be a workhouse to receive him; but at the same time it was provided, that the *moral discipline* should be such, that an able-bodied labourer would prefer going out to earn a subsistence by the sweat of his brow, to remaining in the workhouse. That system had worked well."—*Lord Lyndhurst, Irish Poor-Law Debate*, May 21, 1838.

SO READY TO PERMIT EVERY INQUIRY.—"Mr. Walter said, it was his intention to move for a committee to inquire into the state of the Poor-Laws, and expressed a hope that the Government would give him an opportunity of bringing the subject forward on the day fixed for the motion. Lord J. Russell stated that he would give the hon. member *no facilities* for bringing forward this motion, and refused to say whether he would accede to the motion, or oppose it."—*House of Commons*, Feb. 6, 1837.

SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE, SAUCE FOR THE GANDER.—"The clause enacting that, where the mother of an illegitimate child was dead, her father or mother should be burthened with its maintenance, was given up, so general was the disapprobation with which it was received. Mr. Cobbett, laying it down to be perfectly right that the relations of poor persons should maintain them, actually divided the House on an amendment—"that this clause should be extended to paupers on the pension list receiving money for which no public service had been performed; and that on the children's parents or grandparents of of any such person failing to maintain him or her, the pension should cease and determine!" He found sixteen members to vote with him."—*House of Commons*, March 21, 1834.

THE NEW POOR-LAW BILL.—"This Act was proposed on the 17th of April, 1834, by Lord Althorp; and it was moved to be read that day six months by Sir S. Whalley, one of the members for Marylebone. The amendment was seconded by Alderman Wood, and supported by Mr. Walter, M.P. for Berkshire, and opposed by Messrs. Hume,

Grote, Sir Francis Burdett, Sir James Scarlett, and various other members, who spoke on the question, all agreeing that there was no good reason against the second reading of the Bill, though none of them approved of it as a whole, and each of them pointed out some objectionable provision which might be amended or omitted in the committee."—*Annual Register*, 1834.

LETTING THE LION IN TO TRY TO TURN HIM OUT AGAIN.—"Sir Francis Burdett told a story of a Bill brought in by Mr. Curwen, and still called Mr. Curwen's Act, having been so changed in committee, that a few lines of the preamble were the only part of the original Bill that remained; and he would vote for the second reading of this Bill, *in the hope* that it would share a similar fate!!!"—*Ibid.*

INSULT OF THE POOR AND ROBBING OF THE RATE-PAYERS.—"The Board of Guardians of the Hereford Union, anxious to testify the high estimation in which they hold the important services of their Chairman, John Hopkins, Esq., have invited him, previous to his leaving the county, to a public dinner."—*Hereford Press*, March 16, 1839. "We understand that the Guardians of the Ledbury Union, intend on Thursday, July the 25th, to give a dinner at the Feathers' Inn, Ledbury, to the Rev. J. H. Underwood, M.A., in order to mark the high esteem they entertain of the able and humane manner in which, for two years, that gentleman has discharged the duties of Chairman of the Board."—*Ibid.*, July 20, 1839. "The gentlemen who constituted the late Board of Guardians of the Droitwich Union are about to invite J. S. Packington, Esq., M.P., Chairman, and J. H. Galton, Esq., Vice-chairman, to a public dinner, in order to express to them the sense they entertain of the kindness, attention, and courtesy, with which they have fulfilled the duties of their responsible offices."—*Ibid.*, April 28, 1838. "The Guardians of the Ross Union intend to invite Sir E. W. Head, Bart., Kingsmill Evans, Esq., the Chairman, and W. Bridgeman, Esq., the Vice-chairman, to a public dinner."—*Ibid.*, March 17, 1838. "On the 15th inst., a most sumptuous dinner was given to Tomkyns Dew, Esq., of Whitney-Court, at the Rose and Crown, Hay, by the Guardians and rate-payers (?) of the Hay Union, as a testimonial of the respect and esteem felt for that gentleman, and the sense entertained of his conduct

as Chairman of the Board of Guardians."—*Ibid.*, Oct. 26, 1839. "The Guardians of the Tenbury Union have invited their Chairman to a public dinner."—*Hereford Times*, March 27, 1841.

"NEWCASTLE-EMLYN UNION.—On the 26th ult., being the first board day of the present year, James Richard Lewes Lloyd, Esq., of Dolhaid, was re-elected Chairman of the Board of Guardians. Dr. Jones, of Lancy, in proposing the worthy captain, dwelt for some time on the services he had rendered the Board. Although we did not happen to be present at the time the Doctor was speaking, yet we are informed that he passed the highest encomiums on the conduct of this unwearied gentleman as Chairman, and on behalf of the Guardians and others, presented him with a very chaste silver salver, bearing the arms of the family, and an appropriate inscription. We can declare from the connexion we hold with the Union, that the zealous and indefatigable manner with which Captain Lloyd discharges his duties as Chairman, is a theme of admiration and gratitude amongst all the rate-payers; he is untiring in his exertions to sift and probe matters to the bottom; and when a clear and satisfactory case of real and necessitous poverty is made out, he never flinches to recommend (if compatible with law) that relief be granted: and on many occasions has it been known, that this gallant gentleman has given alms from his own private purse to applicants who could not be legally admitted on the books of the Union. May God's selectest blessings be poured upon him, who in his younger days defended in arms the rights of his country in foreign lands, and who now contributes so greatly to uphold its internal peace at home."—*Carmarthen Journal*, April 16, 1841.

#### "SOUTHWARK ELECTION.

"Mr. Benjamin Wood (brother to the alderman), who is a candidate for the representation of the Borough, has been tolerably goaded at all his meetings, on the question of the Whig Poor-Law, to the *principle* of which he confessed, at one meeting, he was attached. The electors seem determined to have something specific from him, however, and therefore they pursue him, from night to night, with questions of a gravelling kind to one who evidently wishes to shirk them all and take a seat as little encumbered as possible. On Tuesday night, he seemed astonished that he had



not satisfied his friends on this matter, and spoke rather impatiently, but more to the point than upon any former occasion. We take the following short extract from the report in the daily papers :—

“He thought he had settled the new Poor-Law question at the meeting on Friday last; but he would now say, that it would be in his power to do as much to make that bill to their liking, and he hoped to the liking of all classes, as Mr. Walter. (Hear.) Indeed, he thought he could go a great deal further, because Mr. Walter had been too passionate; but he (Mr. Wood) *would be cool*, and would take the matter up under the good advice of those who *knew more about it than he did*, and he would go amongst those electors who had paid a great deal of attention to the conduct of that bill, and then he would act to the best of his judgment. (Hear.)

“A person here asked Mr. Wood what his opinion was upon the separation of man and wife in the Union workhouses?

“Mr. Anderson.—That has nothing to do with the Poor-Laws; that is for the *Guardians of each parish to manage as they like*.

“Mr. Wood resumed.—He believed the great defect of the Poor-Laws was, that the *Guardians were not appointed as they ought to be*. They ought to be elected by those who paid rates, and there should be *no plurality of votes or proxies*. (Hear.) A certain check should be put upon the Guardians; but they should have more power, and for the exercise of that power they should be made responsible to the people.”

“We believe the gentleman will be ‘cool.’ We are afraid that he will be too cool; and, moreover, we are also afraid that he will trust too much to those who ‘know more about it than he does.’ This profession of coolness and of deference to others is awfully ominous, particularly when we find the cool gentleman coming out, in a minute or two, with a confident assertion of his belief of the main defect of the new law, and showing that he does know very well what its defects and iniquities are. To be sure; the plurality and the proxy-voting are ‘defects,’ and much more than defects. They are iniquities; but to call them so is ‘too passionate,’ and the cooler phrase *defect* is a more suitable term for a system of representation, which gives a few individuals the power to tax one part and coerce another part of the community, without any responsibility attaching to the privileged few, or the underlings of their choice! Not one word drops from the lips of this cool gentleman about the cruelties to the poor that have been proved over and over again, and day by day, upon the working of the new law; not a word about the Bridgewater gruel, nor about any of the numerous cases brought forward by Mr. Day. He is *too cool* a

being to be melted by any of these occurrences, and is even *so cool* as to make it a matter of boast, that the inflictions on his fellow-creatures which warmed his adversary into passion, will never produce a heat within his breast. We believe him; but we shall be astonished if the electors of Southwark, particularly the small householders, receive this *icicle* with any more warmth than its own.

“A question was put to Mr. Wood as to what he thought of the separation of man and wife. It was a home question, and he appears to have had a friend at his elbow to ward it off; for Mr. Anderson observed, that it was not a part of the law, but rested *entirely with the Guardians* to do as they liked about it. This is partly true and partly false. It is no part of the law, *in so many words*; but the law gives to the Poor-Law Commissioners absolute power in the making of rules for the governing of workhouses, and in their very first report they state, that one of their regulations, and one of the *main ones*, is to be a complete classification of inmates, in which *married persons are not to be excepted*. This is the state of the law, and, under it, the practice is to separate man and wife *by order of the Poor-Law Commissioners*. So far Mr. Anderson is right in saying that the separation is not a part of the Act of Parliament. But what he next says is totally untrue—viz., that it rests ‘with the Guardians to do as they like;’ for the Guardians are bound by the Act to do what the Commissioners direct. They are bound, for instance, to carry into effect the separation which the Commissioners order. The elector was quite right, therefore, in his attempt to draw out of cool Mr. Wood what his sentiments on this matter are, and we hope the question will be repeated. If he should shuffle it off by saying it is not the Act which commands the separation, but *the Commissioners*, then shift your ground to meet the shuffle, and ask him, ‘what do you mean to do when the *powers of the Commissioners come to be renewed?*’ Hold him fast at this point. Do not let him move from this, until he has given a straightforward answer as to what he will do to *lessen the powers, or altogether destroy the powers*, of those Commissioners.”  
—*Champion*, Dec. 22, 1839.

“DISMISSAL OF THE ASSISTANT-OVERSEER OF CHELTENHAM.—On Thursday last, the Board of Guardians of the Chel-

tenham Union received from the Poor-Law Commissioners an order for the dismissal of Mr. H. G. Trinder, an Assistant-Overseer and collector of the poor-rates for the parish of Cheltenham. After the order had been read, the Board unanimously directed their clerk, Mr. Hubert Gyde, to write a letter to the Poor-Law Commissioners, expressive of their surprise and dissatisfaction at the power the Commissioners had assumed, in dismissing an officer of the Board of Guardians without in any way consulting or even communicating with that body."—*Cheltenham Free Press*, Dec., 1839.

SIR FRETFUL FLAGIARY.—"THE NEWSPAPERS! SIR, THEY ARE THE MOST VILLAINOUS, LICENTIOUS, ABOMINABLE, INFERNAL—NOT THAT I EVER READ THEM—NO, I MAKE IT A RULE NEVER TO LOOK INTO A NEWSPAPER."—"The Duke of Wellington has adopted a rule of never looking into a newspaper: whatever comes from a quarter known to be adverse to the Poor-Law is cast aside by him as tainted with partiality, exaggeration, and the spirit of unfairness; whatever reaches the public in a form not bearing the stamp of official authority, is equally neglected as unauthentic."—*Times*, March 1, 1841.

STUFF OF NONSENSE.—"Sir J. Swinburne, Bart., contributed £100 to the erection of the Bellingham Union Workhouse—a building which, to the honour of owners of property in the Union, has been erected altogether by public subscription, instead of poor-rates."—*Conservative Journal*, March 6, 1841.

"DEFENCE OF THE NEW POOR-LAW.—It is really edifying to observe the kind of arguments by which the Liberal supporters of the New Poor-Law endeavour to prop up their sinking cause. Their staple assertion, to which they resort on all occasions, is, 'that the former law was full of errors, and subject to great abuses, and that it could never, under any circumstances, be resorted to again.' Be it so; but let the same principle be acted upon in the case of the New Poor-Law too, which is also 'full of errors,' and subject to 'great abuses,' and which, therefore, upon the reasoning of these legislators, ought to be instantly and for ever discarded."—*Times*, March 24, 1841.

"Mr. Hawes (debate, March 22, 1841) declared solemnly, that the old workhouses might justly be called places of torture. The aged and the young, the vicious and the virtuous, were huddled

together without order or classification.' Now, workhouses were no part of the system of Queen Elizabeth's Law,—they were introduced by the Act of George I., which Lord John Russell eulogised a few weeks ago, and from thence were copied into the new system."—*Times*, March 24, 1841.

"A petition against the New Poor-Law was presented by Mr. L. Hodges, signed by 2,455 rate-payers of Ipswich. The hon. member said he was instructed to mention, that an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner had gone round and canvassed the inhabitants not to sign."—*House of Commons*, March 9, 1841.

COMMISSIONERS.—"The proposition to place the estates of boroughs in the hands of Commissioners of the Crown, involved the greatest invasion of property that has yet been attempted."—*Lord John Russell's Speech on the Reform of Irish Corporations*, 1836.

THE POOR-LAW COMMITTEE IN 1838.—"Seventeen out of its twenty-one members supported every proposition which emanated from the Commissioners."

"He (Mr. Wakley) objected to the two great objects of the measure. The first was, that the Bill was to be renewed for a period of ten years; and next, that it would give to the Commissioners whatever extent of power they pleased. In fact, he believed that most members were ignorant of the real object sought by the working of the Bill. He was emboldened in this assertion by what had fallen the other evening from his hon. friend the member for Kilkenny,\* and the reply made to it by the noble lord the Secretary for the Colonies.† In the discussion which took place on the introduction of the Bill, his hon. friend had said that the real object of the Bill was to make a distinction between that poverty which was the result of vice and profligacy, and that casual poverty in which the honest and industrious were sometimes involved. If such were the real object of the Bill, who was there that would raise his voice or hand against it? But was that the object avowed by the noble lord? No such thing. The noble lord, with a candour and manliness which distinguished him in the support of those measures which he believed, mistakenly or otherwise, to be for the public advantage, did on that occasion openly and fairly state what he

\* Mr. Hume.

† Lord John Russell.



believed to be the real object of the Bill. And what was that object recognized in the senate of England, that country which boasted of her institutions, of her great power, her great naval and military forces, her arts, her trade, and commerce? He would state the object as it was mentioned by the noble lord:—"He differed very much from his hon. and learned friend (the member for Tynemouth), in thinking that a distinction should be made in favour of merit; he thought it most unreasonable that any Board should pretend to say who was meritorious. All the public could do in the shape of relief was to adhere to that wise and good principle of the Act of Elizabeth, that no poor person in the country should be allowed to starve" ('hear, hear,' from some members on the Ministerial benches); and this was the boon held out to the poor of England by the 'Liberals,' as they were called, and from some of whom he thought he had just heard a cheer at his quotation. In the term 'liberal,' according to some hon. members, was included everything that was great and generous. Doubting of those meanings, he had looked out for the word in Todd's *Johnson*, and there he found that its meanings were given as 'generous,' 'noble,' 'magnanimous,' 'the opposite to parsimony and parsimoniousness.' He owned, however, that he did not think those terms applied to the term 'liberal' in its modern political application. But the statement of the noble lord had shown what was the 'liberal' treatment of the poor. You might incarcerate them in Union prisons; you might whip them once a fortnight—torture them always—clothe them in the degrading dress—but then you would not allow them to starve. That was wise, and just, and liberal. Whatever else the poor might be made to endure, they were not to be allowed to starve. He had never in that House been a party man. He believed that faction was the curse of this country. He was not, therefore, a member of any faction, nor would he ever bind himself down to the opinion of any Minister, be he who he might; and he would say to the noble lord and his colleagues, and those who supported them, that if they wished to have the support of the people, they must not have such Bills as that which was then before the House. In the name, then, of the poor people of England, he felt bound to make an appeal to the great Conservative party, and to

implore them to come to the rescue. The great landowners of the Conservative body were the natural protectors of the poor, who looked to them for protection. They were not alarmed about the corn-laws, for they knew that with the rise in the price of bread, there must be a corresponding increase in the rate of wages. ('Hear,' from, we believe, Mr. O'Connell.) He heard again another cheer from the 'Liberal' side. He was surprised to hear the hon. and learned member for Dublin groaning at the truth. He repeated, that he appealed in the name of the poor to the great Conservative body as their protectors. From the 'Liberal' side they had now nothing to expect. They (the Liberals) now confided in the noble lord, because they knew that he would not deceive them, and because he advocated that most liberal principle, 'that the poor were not to be allowed to starve,' and with that object the Poor-Law Commissioners were to be invested with almost unlimited power for ten years. But how was the necessity for this renewal shown? It was shown by the report of those very men who were to live by it. They got a hint that such a report would be desirable—that amongst its happy results would be found that the Commission would be continued for ten years more, and for ever, for that matter. The report was of course ready at the expected time. It was laid, with all due formality, before the noble lord, who, with equal formality, laid it on the table of the House, and then, according to fresh directions, a Bill was concocted from the report, and that Bill was now before them. One of the points in the report most characteristic of the Commissioners (hear) was, that the paupers who received relief from the Boards of Guardians did not display a spirit of gratitude. He durst say they did not. He knew how paupers were treated by Guardians in general, what sympathy they met with, and how they were dealt with when they got into the Union workhouses; and he could well conceive how the relief granted by the Boards of Guardians might not be always received in the most gratifying manner. But he denied that gratitude could be expected in the case; and more, he held that those who did expect gratitude from paupers, were not qualified to frame or to carry out a Poor-Law. (Hear.) What! were the paupers slaves? Were they, because they were poor, to sacrifice every right which they had possessed

as independent men? But they showed no gratitude, forsooth! He said gratitude was not called for from them; they ought not to show any gratitude. By what means were they entitled to relief? Why of right, by Act of Parliament; by the law of the land; by right confirmed by Act of Parliament; in fact, they had precisely the same right to relief that the richest man the House held had to his lands. The law of the land had given precisely the same right in the one case as in the other. He denied, therefore, that the paupers ought to be called upon to show gratitude to the hands that relieved them.”—*House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

“Mr. T. Duncombe said, the present question was, not whether they would adhere to, or abandon the present system; but whether they would agree to the second reading of a Bill entitled, ‘A Bill to Amend the present Poor-Law Amendment Act,’ but in which he found no amendment at all, but an aggravation of every evil and every subject of complaint which existed under the present system. It was, therefore, not fair in arguing this question to say, ‘Shall we adhere to, or shall we abandon, the present system?’ He did not say anything against the present Commissioners; he said, if the Commissioners were to be continued, he did not believe the law could be safer than in their hands; but he had a right to find fault with the system under which they were acting. (Hear, hear.) The Bill professed to be a Bill to amend the present law; but where did it amend it? (Hear, hear.) Why did not the Government introduce a short Bill of six lines, merely to say that the Commission should be perpetual; and that the Commissioners should have the full powers of the Commons, Lords, and the Crown, for the present Bill did confer on them such power? They had the power to make any rule or regulation they pleased. About two years ago he had brought before the House some rules and orders issued from Somerset-house with regard to the appointment of clerks of Unions to be returning officers of the Boards of Guardians, which ought to have been general rules, and should have been laid before the Secretary of State. He had asked whether they had ever been laid before the Secretary of State, and the answer was, ‘No;’ but there was no necessity to send them, as, in the original orders, all the names of the Unions they

were directed to were not inserted, and, though they went by the same post, they were not general rules. Everybody knew that there were two lists, Whig and Tory, and if the clerk of a Union happened to be a Tory, he took care that Liberals should be excluded. Such things had happened in two parishes in the borough he represented, and the Poor-Law Commissioners had held the return to be a legal return.”—*House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

“It was not to any saving of money he looked in upholding this law, but to the improvement it would produce in the state of the virtuous poor; and if that object were attained, even if the rates were doubled, neither he, nor he believed any country gentleman of England, would begrudge the money. The question before the House appeared to him, as the right hon. baronet opposite had suggested, to divide itself into two parts: namely, whether they should abandon the new system altogether, or, if they continued that system, whether it should be under the central superintendence or management of the Poor-Law Commissioners. He took it to be next to impossible to abandon the system. No man in this country, not even the hon. member for Finsbury himself, could, he thought, contemplate such a thing in order to go back to the old system. The vices of that system had been already so well described, that he would not again allude to them; but he believed there was no one who was willing to risk their return. The question then was, whether they could carry out the new system without the aid of central management. In his opinion that aid was necessary to carry out the system to a proper extent. Some hon. gentlemen might differ from him on that point, but against all their opinions he would endeavour to show, that without central management, they ran the risk of falling into the only course by which they could return to the old system. He would quote a passage from (as we understood) the report of the committee on which the law was founded. It was this:—‘The committee believe the powers of the Central Board to be indispensable to the execution of the law; and that without them there will be no security against a recurrence to almost every variety of mismanagement and abuse.’ Now, if they intended to go on improving, they must

\* Sir R. Peel.

† Wakley.



continue that central system ; for, if not, then would the hon. gentleman be quite right in withstanding the prolongation of the measure at all. But upon what was founded originally the Poor-Law Commission ? On the recommendation of the Commissioners of Inquiry who had been appointed to investigate the subject. And on what ground did they form their opinion ? Not upon any fancies of their own, but on the good system of management which had been adopted in some particular parishes that fell under their notice. That good system, then, which they found established in those parishes, they recommended for adoption throughout the whole country of England and Wales. The only way for that to be done was, for some central authority to see that the same management was observed in all quarters. And while he was speaking of the value of a central authority, he might quote instances that had occurred in his own experience. He hoped hon. members would not think, when he used the term ‘gaol,’ that he was confounding the subject of prisons with that of Unions, but the whole of the prisons in Scotland had been placed under a system of central management, and it had proved to be one of the best systems for prison discipline, and all had given it their hearty approbation. But what happened last year in that House, when, night after night, he defended the conduct of the visiting justices ? Was he not assailed at that time with the charge of their being no system of general management ? And yet now they turned round and opposed that principle. Although a great improvement, as they must admit, had been made in the administration of the Poor-Laws, still there was a great deal to be done ; there was a large field still over which the influence and authority of the Poor-Law Commissioners had not been able to extend. If, then, they left it as it was, they would deprive the country of the advantages which that influence and authority would produce—they would leave their work little more than three parts done, and the result would be, that they would have amended the state of things in one part of the country, whilst no system was introduced into another.”—*Mr. Fox Maule, House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1841.*

“Mr. G. Knight, notwithstanding what had been said against centralization, trusted the House would consent to go into committee on a Bill founded upon the

amended system of the New Poor-Law. That advantage should be taken of peculiar topics and circumstances to inveigh against the law did not surprise him, when he considered what an easy road to popularity such a course opened up. (Hear.) It was much easier and more agreeable to give than to refuse, when the grant was to be made with other people’s property. It was, however, by no means agreeable to those who advocated the new system to be held up to public odium as the oppressors of the poor ; but those who made such representations should recollect the state of things before the introduction of the present law. They should call to mind the unjust system of paying wages out of the poor-rates, and the extent to which the old system repressed industry, whilst it encouraged idleness. Now, which were the real friends of the poor—those who, by adhering to the old system, would encourage the lazy and profligate, or those who, by promoting the operation of the new system, would teach them industry and prudence, and a reliance upon their own exertions, and thus insure them better wages than they could formerly gain ? Those who aimed at the latter object were surely less the enemies of the poor than those who, by inflammatory appeals to their passions, excited them against the law. This is the only country which compelled those not paupers to contribute to the support of those who were. He did not complain of this. On the contrary, he should desire to see the principle generally established. But had anything been done under the New Poor-Law which could not also have been done under the old ? In a parish with which he was connected, and which had not as yet been brought under the operation of the new law, the principles of that law had notwithstanding been acted upon ; nay, more, they had been anticipated in practice for two years before the passing of the New Poor-Law. This showed that what was done under the new law could be, and had been done, under the old. In that parish, by adopting these principles, a saving of £25,000 had been effected, and the condition of the poor had been at the same time much improved. As to the particular cases of alleged oppression which had been instanced, he believed it would be found that, when traced to their sources, they would be shown either to be unfounded, or very much exaggerated. He did not stand up to defend severe or

harsh treatment; on the contrary, he was most desirous that all oppressors and wrong-doers should be punished. But it should be remembered that these alleged oppressions were not the result of the new law. The evils inflicted on the poor were greater when the old law was in operation than now. The pauper could not now, as he was then, be banded about from parish to parish; but when he was shown to be destitute he must be relieved on the spot. As to the case of the old man sixty years of age, it should be recollected that the new law authorized out-door relief to that class. It was only to the able-bodied, who could work, that out-door relief was refused, and even in these instances it was permitted in cases of infirmity. It was easy to call the workhouse a prison or bastille, and the poor man who laboured to keep himself and family out of it was deserving of respect; but if that same man chose to eat the bread of idleness, he had no right to decry it as not being a proper place for him. It was better in a great many instances, as respected shelter and food, than the labourer could have at his own home, and therefore, unless confinement were made one of the conditions, how could the workhouse be made less desirable than his own cottage? If the able-bodied labourer were to receive out-door relief to what class could it be refused? and this being kept in view, it would be seen that the applications would be so numerous as to destroy altogether the working of the system. (Hear.)"—*House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

"This was an enactment which in common justice was due to the humble and independent labourer, who toiled incessantly to keep himself from the degradation of receiving parochial relief. The continuance of the present Poor-Law was due to the community at large, but, above all, it was due to the working classes themselves, for without it there could be no hope of improvement, either in their moral, or their physical condition. As to retracing our steps the idea could not for a moment be entertained. He never denied that there were cases of deep distress, but he should never assent to the doctrine, that general rules of legislation should be founded upon particular cases. That House, he trusted, would never decide upon individual instances. He did not doubt that cases of extreme distress and hardship might be cited, and might be more easily cited now than when the

workhouses were small, for large establishments necessarily led to increased publicity. In the old workhouses, which were carried on upon a small scale, cases of abuse of power, cases of cruelty and hardship, must have existed, and he suspected that they did exist to a much greater extent, and were of a far more aggravated character, than had ever yet come to the knowledge of the public. (Hear, hear.) He did not deny the existence of abuses at present, he lamented that they were to be found; but he conceived that the best way of mitigating those causes of complaint would be to maintain a plan which, by reason of the great scale on which it was worked, afforded that protection against abuse and tyranny, which publicity usually supplied. Influenced by considerations such as these, he had been induced to give the measure his support, and now he should deeply regret being convinced that the experiment of 1834 had failed, and must be abandoned. If such a conviction were forced upon him by circumstances, he should overlook his disappointment, and do that which upon the whole he thought would be most advantageous to the country, but he repeated that it would occasion him great regret to be obliged to abandon the plan of 1834. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that they must give up the measure of 1834, he desired to know what they proposed to substitute in its stead—what system was to be adopted? They had heard of no project, nor had the most distant mention been made of any fresh plan. Taking for granted, then, that they must adhere to the general principles of the New Poor-Law, he wished to put this question—did they or did they not think it best to intrust the administration of the law to individuals scattered over various parts of the country, or to a central commission in London? (Hear, hear.) Amongst the causes of complaint urged against the old system was the want of uniformity in its working, while the distinguishing feature of the new plan was its tendency to maintain that uniformity. (Hear, hear.) With respect to the speech of the hon. gentleman opposite, the member for Birmingham,\* he must be permitted to say, that it was anything but satisfactory; it was unsatisfactory as a piece of logical argument. The hon. member appeared to say, that the evil was not so much in the law itself, as in the administration of

\* Muntz.



the law—that there was great diversity in the mode of its administration. Surely, that was the very evil for which the present system was framed and fitted to afford a remedy. One of the faults of the old system was, that it did not discover the idle, but indiscriminately gave relief to all. The hon. member opposite said, that wages rose as poor-rates diminished; and that ‘the stupid farmers,’ as he called them, had now as much to pay as ever; but that result was desired. The hon. member complained, that the farmers paid the wages of the working men out of the poor-rates. It was true that in many cases that happened; but the operation of a central commission put an end to the practice. (Hear.) The act of Elizabeth had been well administered in some parts of the country, and ill administered in others, and, as the House had frequently heard, a great variety of practice prevailed. Now, that was just the evil which the establishment of a Central Board was calculated to prevent by the gradual introduction of a uniform system—of a system more likely to be uniform and humane, than if left to the sole management of the Guardians of individual parishes. The hon. member for Birmingham was a high authority upon a question of this nature; he employed a great number of working men, and there could be no doubt that he was influenced by the most humane and benevolent motives; but he requested the House to consider for a moment the argument of the hon. member; it was, that the altered system of the Poor-Laws had increased rent and wages; and that, therefore, the position of the farmer was not ameliorated. To that it could with perfect fairness be replied, that the object of the measure was not to improve the state of the farmer, so much as to elevate the condition of the working classes; he (Sir R. Peel) rejoiced to hear that the effect of the measure had been to increase wages—that the balance was against the employer, and in favour of the working man. It was only by making this distinction between the idle and the industrious that the independent labourer could be encouraged. (Hear.) The hon. member for Finsbury had referred to the working of the Poor-Law in Devonshire. It did so happen, that in that county a greater amount of out-door relief was granted than in any other, at the same time that he (Sir R. Peel) did not for a moment suppose, that 7s. a-week was a sum sufficient to main-

tain a working man and his family; but he denied that the state of the poor in Devon at all arose from the application of the workhouse test. (Hear, hear.) On the general grounds, then, which he had stated, remembering the evils of the old system, impressed with a conviction that the present law afforded the best chance of a good administration of the funds available for the use of the poor, he should vote for the second reading of the bill, reserving, however, to himself the most perfect freedom of judgment with regard to the policy of the several clauses. (Hear, hear.)—*Sir Robert Peel, House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1841.*

“Take, for example, the parish of Kensington. How many relieving officers did it contain? The parish had 25,000 inhabitants, and was 16 miles in circumference. It bordered on their court, and was under the very noses of the Commissioners. Yet it had but one relieving officer. (Hear, hear.) In St. Luke’s there were 40,000 inhabitants, and the relieving officer had latterly received the benefit of an assistant. (Hear.) Was it possible that the poor could have adequate relief under such a system? It was impossible; and the people knew it. What was the language held by a relieving officer to the wife of a man who had gone down to the Stratford-upon-Avon Union, and had subsequently returned to the parish of Chelsea? The moment he saw the woman he said, ‘I shall hang you.’ He afterwards admitted that he had used this expression, but said that it was only a joke. He (Mr. Wakley) did not comprehend this description of joke. In the Kensington Union what had happened in the case of Elizabeth Friry? She was a poor, exhausted, and decrepit creature, with mortified legs. A poor Irish girl, who gave her a shelter, went to the doctor of the Union, and asked him for God’s sake to come in and see her. The girl was quite alarmed, and informed him, that she had been told by some of the people about the workhouse, that she had subjected herself to three months’ imprisonment for giving the poor woman shelter. When the girl mentioned this to the relieving officer, ‘And serve you right, too,’ was the remark which he made. These officers were, it was true, censured by the Commissioners; but they were not deprived of their situations, and vague censure was of little use with such men. The Commissioners exercised a novel function in all these cases. After one of the consti-

tutional authorities has instituted an inquiry, and the rate-payers have given their opinion, what did the Commissioners do? They sent down an agent of their own to inquire, and contrive, by every ingenuity, to get rid of the moral effect produced by the verdict of the jury. What did hon. gentlemen think of this new function? (Hear, hear.) In the Hendon Union the Commissioners authorized the Guardians to issue a publication reflecting on the jury. Look to the case of Lisney. This poor man was admitted into the Hendon Union in April last year. In July he asked for permission to see some of his family. He was not allowed. In August he made the same request. The answer which he received was, 'Not at present.' In September he renewed his application. The answer was, 'No.' In October he made another application, and was again refused. Now, an entry had been made on the books by the Governor of the workhouse, to the effect, that this poor man was afflicted with a disease which would prove mortal, and that if he was not allowed to go out shortly, the long days would cease, and he might not be able to go at all. On the 4th of November, the Guardians visited the house, and, in the Governor's presence, Lisney said, 'Have I got my holiday yet?'—'I don't know,' was the answer. 'If I haven't,' said Lisney, 'I ought to have it.' Hereupon one of the Guardians said, 'What is that you say?' 'It is very hard (was Lisney's reply) that I am not to have a holiday as well as other men.' He followed them into the passage, and the relieving officer said, 'Go away.' 'I don't see why,' said Lisney. He was called up immediately afterwards to the Board-room. Now, that man was afflicted with the disease called 'diabetes,' which almost always proves fatal, and how was he sentenced by this Board of Guardians, whom the Commissioners laud for their humanity—this exceedingly kind, this remarkably generous Board,—a Board, too, possessed of very great experience? It was entered in their communication book, that 'James Lisney wanted to see the Board; that he saw the Board, and was ordered twenty-four hours' bread and water.' But this was not all; he was ordered into close confinement besides. (Hear, hear.) He was confined in a separate room; he was put in on the night of the 4th of November, and kept there until six o'clock on the following morning. The place where he was confined had no ceiling; it was

only covered with tiles; and the weather was exceedingly cold at the time. When he came out, he told his companions he was so cold and shivering that he could sit upon the fire. (Hear, hear.) The medical man, who gave his testimony upon this occasion, said, that he could not separate the punishment of James Lisney from the death of James Lisney. This medical witness was a gentleman of great experience, wholly uninfluenced by feelings of partizanship or political leanings. In fact, he had never taken any part in the administration of the Poor-Law. In this case he (Mr. Wakley) had felt it to be his duty to take the evidence of the paupers in the house. For this he had been condemned; but how else was he to get at the facts? Was he to rely implicitly on the evidence of the master? Was he to receive the evidence of the Guardians who inflicted the punishment? To shut out the only testimony which could be satisfactory to a jury? (Hear, hear.) Yet the Commissioners presumed, with the money of the people in their pockets, sitting in Somerset-house, to permit the Guardians to send forth a libel on the jury which returned the verdict. Was this a thing to be endured in a civilized country, in a country boasting of its freedom? (Hear, hear.) He called on the noble lord to cause the notes taken on this occasion for the Poor-Law Commissioners to be published, for the information of the House and the country. The Commissioners had a reporter on the spot."—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1841.*

"Sir R. Peel rose for the purpose of stating his reasons for supporting the second reading of the Bill then under the consideration of the House. It appeared to him, that in discussing this measure there were two main questions to be kept in view. The first was, whether it was advisable to adhere to, or abandon, the great experiment made in 1834; and, secondly, whether, if the House thought it expedient to allow the law to remain unchanged, a Board of Central Commissioners was necessary to carry it into successful operation. When the Poor-Law Amendment Bill was introduced to the House, he assented to its being a law of the land, not for the reasons assigned by some hon. members opposite, for the purpose of diminishing the amount of assessment, but to remove great evils, the existence of which all admitted. The condition of the country at that period would



admit of no delay; a change was inevitable; the old Poor-Law, like a cancer, was corroding the industry of the country; pauperism, demoralization, crime, and starvation, existed to an alarming extent, thus rendering a continuance of the old Law an utter impossibility. He was ready to admit, that had there existed a Conservative Government in 1834, when the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill was introduced into Parliament, it would have had to encounter great difficulties in passing the measure through the House, as it would have been opposed by a large section of hon. members who, on general measures, support the Government, but who, whenever this question was discussed, placed themselves in opposition. In order to carry such a measure, it did require the unbounded confidence and active, zealous, unremitting co-operation of a great political party. In discussing the merits of this Bill, the House should not forget the state of things, the actual condition of the country, prior to the alterations made by the Bill of 1834. He admitted that it was natural for the mind to dwell on existing evils, those present to the mind at the moment, and to forget all previous ones; but this was not taking a statesmanlike view of the question. He would briefly remind the House of the enormities that sprung out of the old Poor-Law, the consideration of which had mainly induced him (Sir R. Peel) to co-operate with the Government in carrying the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill through Parliament. In 1824 a committee of that House was appointed to inquire into the condition of labourers' wages, and a witness was examined relative to the hundred of Blandon, in the county of Suffolk. It appeared, that in that hundred the sum applied to the unemployed poor had gone on progressively increasing from Lady-day, 1810, to Lady-day, 1823. The sum applied to that purpose for the year, from Lady-day, 1809 to 1810, was £1 3s.; in the next year, £1 12s., in the following it amounted to £3, in 1814, to £6, and in the following year it was £5. It went on increasing until 1834. In 1816 the sum had increased to £2,397, and in 1822, to £3,556. This Union consisted of 46 incorporated parishes. The whole of the evidence contained in the report then before him went to show, that in the 46 parishes from which the facts had been collected, there had been a progressive increase in the rates, a progressive increase in the amount of relief, and in the numbers to whom that

relief had been granted. He would now ask what had been the result of the system which displayed this tendency? Had there been anything like a corresponding moral improvement in the condition of the people? On the contrary, there had been a manifest deterioration. The witnesses stated, that relief to the unemployed poor had effects which might naturally be anticipated from the payment of money as the wages, not of labour, but of idleness. They described the effects of that system as dreadful, as demoralizing in an extreme degree, as converting the sober and the industrious into poachers, thieves, and robbers; and let the House recollect that that was the testimony, not of persons who could have any strong prepossession in favour of the present Poor-Law, or any prejudice against it—the evidence before him was that of most unbiassed witnesses; he was far, however, from saying that this afforded any argument against relief being afforded to the industrious, when no doubt existed as to their being really industrious. When these witnesses were asked if crime flowed or appeared to flow from the then existing Poor-Law, their answers were to the effect, that it was a most fertile source of crime, and nothing else could be expected as the consequence of giving money without exacting labour. Its effects were to break the bond of union, which subsisted between the labourer and the farmer. In former times it was not unusual, but, on the contrary, it was the general practice, for the labourer to continue on the same farm, not merely for a few years, but for the term of his life. In the success of the farmer he rejoiced, and sympathized with him in his disappointments. He was the friend of the farmer, almost a member of his family. But now, the husbandman was a mere servant, whose connexion with his employer was of the most temporary description; when his task was finished, the interest which he took in the affairs of the farm altogether ceased; and when the period of his engagement expired, he sought elsewhere for fresh employment, or became a burden to his parish. No case, then, could present a more striking exemplification, than the operation of the old Poor-Law did of a contrivance to pay the wages of idleness from the fruits of honest industry. The able-bodied poor, when in possession of out-door relief, were seen to waste their time in idle games, or insulting the passengers along the public roads, or else spending the day in sleep to prepare themselves for the execution of

those practices which required darkness and concealment. The men whom those witnesses thus described were in the habit of receiving 4s. 6d. and 5s. a-week."—*House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS' COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES.—"In order to form a colourable pretext for an accusation of the poor-rates causing great distress among the landlords and farmers, the Commissioners sent out circular questions to noblemen, gentlemen, magistrates, and farmers, of all the counties of England and Wales. The two questions which more immediately bear upon our subject were the following:—'Is the amount of agricultural capital in your neighbourhood increasing or diminishing?' and, 'Do you attribute such increase or diminution to any cause connected with the administration of the Poor-Laws?' These questions were sent to 1717 persons, and the answers were as follow:—Every one of these persons, *except one*, returned for answer to the first question, that agricultural capital was *diminishing*, that is, that all individuals connected with the cultivation of the soil were daily becoming poorer. In answer to the second question, relative to the supposed cause of this poverty, 401 positively declared that the administration of the Poor-Laws had nothing to do with the diminishing their resources; 1,157 assigned other causes for this pecuniary depression, or assigned no cause at all; and now, reader, mark the residue of the number, 159 only ascribed the diminution of capital to causes connected with the poor-rates! Only this pitiful number! and out of these several were so ashamed of the answer sent, that they shrunk from adding their names to them, and they were accordingly received and published upon anonymous authority." *Blakey's "General Principles of Parochial Relief."*

POOR LAW PARTY WORK—"Lord Devon asked the Secretary for the Home Department, whether he was aware, or had heard, that in the Poor-Law Union of Cloghereen, in the county of Tipperary, the names mentioned in the books of the valuers had been marked by political distinctions, and that the words 'Tory out' had been appended to several of them."—*House of Lords*, Feb. 11, 1841.

TRUE PATRIOTS THEY, BE IT UNDERSTOOD—"Mr. W. Denison presented a petition from the Guardians of a parish in Surrey *in favour* of the Poor-Law Bill"—*House of Commons*, March 29, 1841.

"Lord Howick presented a petition from Norfolk, signed by several persons who had been for five years carrying the existing law into effect, testifying to its beneficial effects upon the poor, and the great *moral improvement* of which it had been the cause. It added, that affording out-door assistance to able-bodied men would be destructive of the *advantages* which had already been attained, and reintroduce all the evils of the old system. The petition further expressed a belief that the present system afforded full means of affording out-door relief to deserving objects."—*House of Commons*, March 19, 1841.

"Mr. Hawes presented a petition from the Guardians of Richmond, Surrey, expressing their *satisfaction* with the Bill, and stating that the law had been administered in their Union without creating any dissatisfaction!!"—*House of Commons*, March, 26, 1841.

"The Duke of Wellington presented a petition from the Guardians of a Poor-Law Union, in the county of Southampton, *in favour* of the continuance of the powers of the Poor-Law Commissioners, as is contemplated by the Poor-Law Amendment - Bill."—*House of Lords*, March 16, 1841.



## THE NEW POOR-LAW OPPOSITION.

THEIR OPINIONS OF THE ACT, AND ITS PRINCIPLES.

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"Some eminent in virtue shall start up,  
Even in perversest time :  
The truths of their pure lips that never die,  
Shall bind the scorpion falsehood with a wreath  
Of ever living flame,  
Until the monster sting itself to death."—QUEEN MAB.

"Full of wise saws and modern instances."—AS YOU LIKE IT.

"————— Confirmations strong  
As proofs of holy writ."—OTHELLO.

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"Whatever is destructive of the constitution, cannot itself be the constitution ; for then the constitution would be *felo de se*."—Atkins.

"The New Poor-Law and the Aristocracy cannot long exist together."—Samuel Roberts (of Sheffield.)

"It is unconstitutional; no power is lodged with the Legislature to pass such a Bill. If, indeed, things have got to this, the only remedy would be a national convention. But I can do no good now. I have withdrawn from the House of Lords. It is sure to pass; for nowadays they will pass anything."—Lord Eldon.

"If the rights of the poor were invaded, the property of the rich would not long be safe."—Mr. Walter, Freemasons' Tavern, June 24, 1839.

"I, in the most express terms, deny the competency of Parliament to pass this 'Act.' I warn you—do not dare to lay your hand on the constitution. I tell you, that if, circumstanced as you are, you pass this 'Act,' it will be a nullity, and that no man will be bound to obey it. I repeat it, and I call on any man who hears me, to take down my words. You have not been elected for this purpose. You have been appointed to make laws, not legislators—you are appointed to act under the constitution, not to destroy it—you are appointed to exercise the functions of legislators, and not to trample on them; and if you do so, your act is a dissolution of the Government—you resolve society into its original elements, and no man in the land is bound to obey you."—Lord Chancellor Plunket.

"A more odious Bill, considering the circumstances of the times, or more cruel and unjust to the poorer classes of the community, had never received the sanction

of the British Parliament. Its effects had been oppressive and injurious not only to the working classes, but had also diminished the profits of the merchant and the landholder. He entreated them not to persevere with this tyrannical and odious Bill, which ground down the faces of the poor; and told honourable members that they knew as little of the subject, as he did of music, or of the cloisters of Oxford and Cambridge."—Mr. T. Attwood, in the House of Commons, July 15, 1839.

"It is a tyranny which the people of England will never submit to."—Sir James Scarlett, House of Commons, April, 1834.

"This law is contrary to the maxims, and to every principle of the laws of this country."—Lord Wynford, July, 1834.

"The Poor-Law Act is only an experiment which the Government dare not carry into execution in some parts of the country."—Lord Lyndhurst, on the Second Reading of the Irish Poor-Law, May, 1838.

"The most execrable law that ever was enacted in any Christian country."—Lord Eldon.

"Britons! if you believe in God and fear him—if you honour your Queen—if you love your country—if you value your liberty—if you regard equal laws—if you abhor tyranny and delight in justice—if you esteem purity in the female character, and execrate deceptive villainy in its betrayers—if you regard your aged parents and love your children—if you hate the Devil and all his works—join hand, heart, voice, and unwearied exertions, to rid your degraded, afflicted country of this hell-concocted New Poor-Law."—Mr. Sam. Roberts (of Sheffield.)

"The Poor-Law said to the pauper, 'Thou hast no right to live;' but it also said to the monarch, 'Thou hast no right to reign.' It was the inalienable right of a constitutional monarchy to know what are the laws by which its people are to be governed. The law of the land, according to the constitution of England, was not law unless it was known to be the will of the monarch. And yet this accursed law had absolutely pushed her Majesty on one side, and said to her, 'We want none of thy interference!' and it had appointed three scoundrels, under the name of Commissioners, to make laws for her people."—*Richard Oastler*.

"If ever an adverse state of the manufacturers' interests should occur, it would be impossible to carry it into operation. I do not believe it is an Act calculated for the state of a population out of employ—but in employment."—*Mr. Cayley, M. P.*, Nov., 1836.

"A law which will not be enforced in England unless the Bible be first burnt, and Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights with it, in every market-place in England."—*Richard Oastler*.

"There never had been so gross an imposition practised as in passing the New Poor-Law. The papers were teeming with complaints of the cruelty of this law, and the expenses of the Commissioners were enormous."—*Col. Sibthorp, House of Commons*, July, 1839.

"He had no confidence in the Poor-Law Commissioners—for he had closely watched their proceedings, and he did not perceive that they had administered the discretionary powers entrusted to them by the Poor-Law Act in a manner consonant with humanity. Therefore it was his opinion that Parliament should step in and interfere in the matter."—*Lord G. Somerset, House of Commons*, August 8, 1839.

"Ample experience of the New Poor-Law had proved that it was unchristian and inhuman, because it subjected the poor to an irresponsible tyranny, and unjustly assumed that they could always find work, and that when they had work their wages were sufficient."—*Mr. Walter, Freemasons' Tavern*, June 24, 1839.

"He could not imagine how the legislature could think of so degrading and insulting the peasants of England by such a Bill, when they could not tell how soon 500,000 men, as in the days of

Napoleon, might endeavour to invade England."—*Lord Teynham, Ibid.*

"The question was, whether the people would tolerate, without the strongest resistance, the arbitrary power of those dictators, who would by our forefathers never have been endured—whose powers were unconstitutional in their principles, and often cruel and oppressive in their operation. Another question was, whether they would not insist on the natural right of Englishmen—the right of self-government—the right of expending their own funds for those objects, and in that manner, which they deemed best. Would the working classes—those who were the most useful class of society—submit that the relief which they might require should be dealt out to them at the tyrannical will of these despots; irresponsibly invested as they were, with such arbitrary powers, by an Act which had truly been characterized as the most infamous that had ever disgraced a Christian country."—*Earl Stanhope, Ibid.*

"He was decidedly opposed to the centralizing system;—they might as well have three Lord Mayors in London, and thirty itinerant Aldermen—to administer the corporation law, as to have the three Poor-Law Commissioners."—*Mr. T. Duncombe, Ibid.*

"The revoking of the Edict of Nantz, and the consequent massacre of St. Bartholomew, were not equal, by any means, in wickedness and cruel atrocity, to the revoking our long-established, good Old Poor-Law."—*Mr. Samuel Roberts (of Sheffield)*.

"Are we to be told that the poor man has no right to a wife or to a child—are we to be told that the poor man has no right to a cottage? I say, if the poor man has no right to live, neither has the rich. If the poor man has no right to a wife, neither has the rich. If the poor man has no right to children, neither has the rich. If the poor man has no right to a cottage, the noble has no right to a castle—the merchant has no right to a mansion—the shopkeeper has no right to a house—and the Queen upon her throne has no right to her palace. I would not that the Queen should be without a palace; I would not that the cottager should be without a home; but first the cottager. The cottager before the Queen—the labourer before the shopkeeper. Let the poor be the first partakers of the fruits."—*Rev. J. R. Stephens's Third Sermon in London*, June, 1839.



"He was convinced, from experience of what had lately taken place in the manufacturing districts, that it would be quite impossible to enforce the provisions of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act without the employment of the military."—*Mr. John Fielden, M. P., Crown and Anchor Tavern*, Feb. 9, 1838.

"The regulation which so generally prevailed of refusing out-door relief to able-bodied paupers when they applied for it, was contrary to the letter and spirit of the law of the land."—*Lord Wynford, House of Lords*, May 1, 1839.

"With regard to the Bastardy law, he must say, that it was a most unjust law, and led to the commission of some abominable crimes."—*Ibid., Ibid.*

"The Bible and the Poor-Law Amendment-Act cannot live in the same country. If the Poor-Law Amendment-Act be once established in England, the prayer of George III., that every child in his dominions might have a Bible to read and be able to read it, will be crushed, and the Bibles will be taken away from the people, or they will be compelled to hear the Bible read, and professedly preached, to suit the interpretation which they wish the people to receive of the Bible."—*Rev. J. R. Stephens's Sermon*, preached Feb. 10, 1839.

Is it not an insult to our common sense to tell us, that a shilling, or at most 15d., will suitably support a full-grown man for seven days? Do we not all know the value of money, and the price of provisions? and could not any one from the age of 8 to 80, detect the sophistry? The Commissioners have not yet the power of buying provisions at half the rate of other people, though God only knows what extra powers may not soon be attempted to be added to their ambition."—*Times*, Nov., 1836.

"The Poor-Law is not a question of politics, but a question of what belongs to ourselves, and what belongs to our neighbour. He could conceive the wealthiest man so reduced to circumstances of comparative poverty, as to become the inhabitant of a humble cottage, and yet as secure and content in that abode as the proudest of the land. But there must be one thing, without which this happiness could not be complete—without which it could not be said to exist at all. In that cottage corner his wife must sit—the proud, fond mother of the children who gambol in joyous innocence upon that cottage floor. Without

this the cottage is no home to the poor man—nor is the palace, without this, a home to the monarch."—*Rev. J. R. Stephens, at Liverpool*, Sept., 1838.

"He should wish to know at what period of history, ancient or modern, sacred or profane—in what region of the earth, savage or civilized, the diabolical doctrine had been adopted, that poverty should be punished as a crime. Were those to be thus treated by whose labour so large a portion of the wealth of the country was provided, of which wealth they themselves received so scanty a portion?"—*Earl Stanhope, House of Lords*, March 20, 1838.

"It is impossible to contemplate a more complete system of grinding slavery, than that to which this Bill will subject the poor of this country. They must eat, drink, sit, sleep, or work, at the bidding of the Commissioners. They will hardly be allowed to breathe the air, or enjoy the light without their permission. Pass the Bill, and the poor of this country will become more complete slaves, than were the villains who formerly existed in England, or than the slaves in the West Indies."—*Lord Wynford, on the Second Reading*, July 21, 1834.

"It was an Act which struck at the root of all local government; which took from the rate-payers, who raised a fund for the relief of their indigent brethren, all power of control over it. It imposed a tyranny of the worst description; it was a Coercion Bill."—*Mr. John Fielden, M. P., Freemasons' Tavern*, Feb. 19, 1838.

"He hated, he detested the Central Board; he hated, he detested the workhouse; but he disapproved still more strongly of the measure, as having a tendency to reduce the wages of the labouring man, and by that means placing him under the necessity of going to the workhouse."—*Ibid., Ibid.*

"All the reports, statements, and allegations of every kind, of the Poor-Law Commissioners (and he might make the same assertion with respect to the statements of many of the Boards of Guardians) were of that nature, that they were not entitled to the *least credit whatever*; they were totally undeserving of any attention whenever they spoke of any benefit derived by the poor under the Bill: such as their improved condition, the increase of their wages, and the vast felicity of the inmates of the new workhouses."—*Mr. Walter, Freemasons' Tavern*, Feb. 19, 1838.

“London itinerant Commissioners had no right to govern the poor of Leeds, the poor of Sheffield, the poor of Manchester, and Birmingham, of Bradford, and of Huddersfield—to say what family should have one or two loaves of bread allowed—who should be transported to a distant workhouse—or who, driven by the infliction of want, should be banished to a distant settlement. Even tyranny itself should be uniform—despotism should be impartial: but what did these London gentlemen do who professed to be acting on a uniform system? To the London poor they allowed a reasonable portion of wholesome food, with beer; an extra allowance at commemorative feasts; besides a day’s holiday in the week out of the workhouse. The rule for the separation of husband and wife was not acted upon. To the poor country sufferers they allowed, in certain places which had been specified, potato dinners, without bread, and a constant succession of oatmeal gruel to soothe their irritated and inflamed bowels—no beer, but incessant confinement and separation. If this severe course was relaxed, it was owing to the humanity of particular Boards. Was ever such a thing heard of, or had it any place in fact or in analogy in our constitution, that England should be thus governed—that their parish vestries should be thus invaded by aliens—*foreigners*, he might call them—Ministerial adherents—or, to sum up in one ill-omened word, what had now become the bane of this country—by paid Commissioners.”—*Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

“The Prince of Orange said, that he would die in the last ditch in defence of his country. Yes; and I declare in the face of high Heaven, and the brave men who now stand before me, that I will resist this law to the death.”—*Feargus O’Connor, Dewsbury Poor-Law Meeting, Dec. 11, 1837.*

“The flames of liberty are not quenched yet in old England. There was once a Wat Tyler—he bearded a mighty monarch with a hundred thousand English hearts at his back. In other lands there have been Washingtons and William Tells. We pronounce this iniquitous bill to be one which neither the barbarity of a Judge Jeffries, nor the gross sensuality of a Rochester, could have exceeded in infamy and atrocity. It is the enactment of a heavier blow to British freedom, and a greater outrage to English character, than has been inflicted on this great nation for

a thousand years. Peasants of England! be not trodden under like Russian serfs, or African slaves!—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal, March 4, 1837.*

“It was requisite that every labourer in the country should be enabled to provide himself and his family with an abundance, sufficient in quantity, as well as wholesome in quality—that he should have sufficient, and all other articles requisite for his personal comfort, and that he should also keep a cow.”—*Mr. Pitt.*

“The remark which I annex (especially addressed to Conservatives) is—Can you, Gentlemen, afford to lose supporters? Be assured that unless you most distinctly and specifically pledge yourselves to alter the Poor-Laws—unless you tell us, most distinctly and in detail, what you will cancel, and what you will enact, you will at least lose some who are inclined to support you. Puts-off and vague promises will not do at the next election.”—*The Rev. Edmund Dewdney (of Portsea) “Times,” May 18, 1839.*

“A Bill, which established a most cruel and hateful despotism in the place of the old domestic management of parochial affairs,—a despotism undefined, and without any limits to the exercise of its unconstitutional authority,—which avowedly declared its stern determination to compel the people of this country to live on a coarser kind of food,—to submit to a gradual reduction of wages, until reduced to the destitution and squalid wretchedness of their Irish brethren,—and to bend their necks to a yoke which their fathers had never worn, and which they could not wear and live.”—*Stephens’s “Life of Oastler.”*

“The discretionary powers of the Commissioners may, without contradiction, be designated as unconstitutional.”—*Lord Brougham.*

“You may ‘Damn and bullet the beggars’ if you please; but remember the game of ‘Bullets’ is one that two parties can play at. If you wish to make Englishmen into assassins, try to enforce your New Poor-Law and ‘*Bullet the beggars.*’ If you wish to make your factories, and workshops, and warehouses, into barracks and hospitals, try to enforce your New Poor-Law and ‘*Bullet the beggars.*’ Merchants, if you wish to destroy trade, try to enforce the New Poor-Law and ‘*Bullet the beggars.*’ Shopkeepers, if you wish to ruin your customers, try to enforce the New Poor-Law and ‘*Bullet the beggars.*’ Fundholders, if you wish to



lower the funds and soon abolish them, try to enforce the New Poor-Law and '*Bullet the beggars.*' Landlords, if you wish to turn your fields into fields of battle, try to enforce the New Poor-Law and '*Bullet the beggars.*' Whigs, if you wish to dig your own graves and to introduce the Irish system of murder in England, try to enforce the New Poor-Law and '*Bullet the beggars.*'"—*Richard Oastler.*

"An Englishman's house is his castle. The winds of heaven may whistle through the roof; but the finger of power dare not lift the wooden latch."—*Earl Chatham.*

"It is not competent to the legislature to transfer to any other body the power of making any rules, orders, or regulations, that shall have the effect of laws, and that it cannot be shown that the nation has ever authorized or allowed such a transfer of legislative power."—*The Rev. G. S. Bull's Petition to the House of Lords, May 30, 1838.*

"The working of the Bill illustrated the entire policy of the Government. The Poor-Law Commissioners must have torn their hearts from their breasts before they could have promulgated the horrid decree, that infirmity was a crime, and should be treated as such—before they declared the house of sorrow was a gaol, and the fit companions of dejected innocence were to be found in convicted felons. With them age inspired no veneration—infancy, no love—virtue, no respect. Cold and heartless calculators, they see no humanity but in economy—no sympathy but in shillings saved. Who empowered these creatures of the law to set at nought the benignant laws of the Creator?"—*Mr. Daniel Whittle Harvey's Speech at the Southwark Anti-New Poor-Law Meeting, August 23, 1836.*

"The Poor-Law Commissioners are despotic in their authority, and cannot be tolerated; they should be a regulating not a controlling power, an appellant judicature, and not an arbitrary executive."—*Ibid.*

"Holding the situation which I do, it is at all times extremely difficult for me to suppress the feelings which rise in my breast—not a feeling to covet applause from others, but a feeling of humanity at the distress of my fellow-creatures. Since I have held this office, no one knows better than myself what I have suffered. I have endeavoured to act as a conscientious man in the discharge of my duties; but when I have seen my fellow-towns-

men, with their meagre looks and empty bellies—when I have seen dying children, weeping widows, and starving orphans, it is hard to suppress the emotions of the heart, and my mind wanders and roves about seeking to find a cause. Some view it in different lights, and attribute it to various causes, whilst I, thinking for myself, have, as I have already said, hard work to suppress my feelings when I consider it is brought about by the law of the land. In my official capacity, it has been my study not to excite anger, and, from the first period of distress, I have exhorted and advised the working classes to preserve peace and order under their deprivations. There certainly has been an unexampled time of distress, and many cases of want have come before me; and when I see large sums of money collected for the poor, and have observed the operation of the Poor-Laws since I became Mayor, I am satisfied as to their working—that they never can work well for large manufacturing towns like Nottingham, and they never will. I will defy ingenuity, however able and kind the schemes may be, to make them work well—it is an utter impossibility."—*William Roworth, Esq., (Mayor of Nottingham) at a Meeting of the Rate-payers, held in that place, July 16, 1840.*

"The constitution of this country recognized the right of every poor man to maintenance from the soil of his birth; and the same law which confirmed that right, gave the same right to the peer and the rich commoner to the possession of their estates. Abrogate the one, and the other must be destroyed. Interfere with the rights of the poor man, and he would be justified in his resistance to his oppressor."—*Mr. Murphy, at the Freemasons' Tavern, Feb. 19, 1838.*

"He denied altogether that prosperity or content had resulted from the Act, for if they had not the Godsend of the accidental formation of the railroads during the last five years, employing 400,000 otherwise destitute labourers, the working men of England would have been ground to the earth, like the Irish ones."—*Mr. T. Attwood, House of Commons, August 8, 1839.*

"The Bastardy Clause will impose no additional restraint on females, while it will give a greater licence to the low and profligate of our own sex, who may now spawn away with impunity at the parish expense. That it will not impose further restraint on women, one observation will

suffice. If destitution and the pains of childbed, coupled with the shame of public exposure—the dread of which, in the present state of moral feeling, often leads to frightful crimes—fail to curb female indiscretion—how can it be supposed that superadding thereto the mere pecuniary penalty of the maintenance of the child can have any such tendency.”—*Appendix to the Black Book*.

“He would say a word on the Poor-Law. All would admit the old law wanted amendment; but the present Act, if not amended, would be an eternal disgrace to the country. He had known instances where widows of 60 or 70 years of age, were forced to leave their cottages, or lose their allowance of 1s. 6d. a-week.”—*The Hon. Captain Percival (M.P. for West Surrey)*, August 4, 1837.

“Those clauses in the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, which were obnoxious to the people, must and should be altered.”—*Col. Peel (M.P. for Huntingdon)*, “*Huntingdon Independent Press*,” July 29, 1837.

“The two great objects embraced by the 43rd. of Elizabeth, are to relieve the impotent, and to set to work the able-bodied.....But mark the difference of the two periods. Such a monstrous anomaly as an able-bodied man willing to labour, but unable to get employment, was unknown in the time of Lord Burleigh; the great difficulty then was to overcome the propensity to idleness and vagabondage, not to find remunerative labour. At present the case is reversed; there is no lack of industry in the country, but of profitable employment. Yet the framers of the Poor-Act have overlooked this fundamental distinction. They have prescribed a remedy more applicable to the age of Elizabeth than of William IV. They seem to think that the main source of pauperism now, as then, is idleness; and as a corrective of this, have propounded their grand panacea for subjecting all the able-bodied poor to the ordeal of a work-house.”—*Appendix to the Black Book*.

“No economic savings in poor-rates would be an equivalent for a permanent deterioration in the diet, clothing, and lodging, of the mass of the community. Pauperism is a great evil, but there may be a greater. A pauper is a bad member of society, but a beggar, a thief, an assassin, or an incendiary, is a worse. By rigid persecution we may get rid of pauperism; but by converting pauperism into mendicity, or criminality, or into Irish or Rus-

sian helotism, we effect a social change certainly, but no improvement in the condition of society.”—*Ibid*.

“A few instances had occurred of lewd women having more bastards than one, for which they received the parish allowance; hence, it was concluded a general trade was carried on in bastardy, and, as a preventative, the burden of maintaining an illegitimate child has been thrown entirely on the mother. The ordinary parish allowance for a bastard in the Metropolis, was 1s. 6d. a-week; it was no more—most likely less—in the country;—and can any one suppose such a pittance holds out a bounty to incontinence? But see how many principles have been outraged by the New Law! First, it violates one of the most general maxims of jurisprudence, namely, that which imposes on both parents, equally, the obligation to maintain their offspring, whether legitimate or not. Secondly, it violates natural justice; for, if incontinence be an offence at all, it is equally so in both parties, and equally ought the punishment to be apportioned. Lastly, it is monstrous and inhuman to throw the entire burden on the weaker, and, in our opinion, more venial transgressor.”—*Ibid*.

“Would our forefathers, who tore the cowed and monkish James from his ancestral throne, and fought or fell by thousands for the fame of their country—would they have endured this? The bones of Chatham rattle in the grave, and the cuirassed corpse of Cromwell prepares to burst its cerements! If the poor of England *must perish*, at least let us not fall ignobly. Let not the men who struck down the French eagle in its ‘pride of place,’ yield themselves unresistingly!”—*Walker Ord, in the “Conservative Journal,”* Dec. 9, 1837.

“If indeed a large proportion of the people are in want of food, of clothing, of shelter,—if they are sick, miserable, scorned, oppressed, and, if each feeling it in himself, they all say so with one voice and one heart, and lift up their hands to second their appeal—this I should say was but the dictate of common sense, the cry of nature.”—*Hazlitt’s Table Talk*.

“The Poor-Law Amendment-Act has loaded the kingdom with Commissioners, who, it seems, are to have the administration of the affairs of the country thrown entirely into their hands; and then we have long stories from the Secretary, or somebody or another, every now and then, explanatory of the law, and dictating all



sorts of things."—*Church of England Quarterly Review*, Jan., 1837.

"It had been said that the late riots at Birmingham had been caused by excitements on the subject of the Poor-Laws. Whether that assertion was correct or not he would not now inquire; but, considering the authority from which that assertion came, and supposing for a moment that it was true, he would say the best way of getting rid of that excitement was to remove all real grievances. Agitation would cease when the cause was taken away. The inhabitants of this country were a considerate, and, thank God, a religious people, and therefore it was that the laws were honoured and the monarchy safe. But if, unfortunately, the time should come when they could consider the laws of man in opposition to the laws of God, all their religious feeling would be on the other side, and they would feel themselves bound to resist the laws of man. And what, let him ask their lordships, would be the consequences of that resistance? Government stood upon opinion—upon an opinion made up of a feeling of terror, and, happily in this country, of a deep sense of duty. Terror alone could do nothing, for the sense of duty was the firm foundation upon which all rested. But their lordships might depend that the sense of duty would not long survive the consciousness of oppression—that it would not long survive when the people felt strongly that the laws of God were violated by the laws of man." *Bishop of Exeter, House of Lords*, July, 1839.

"What are Lords? Often, I suppose, the sons of Dukes! Well, if such had been born with a long tail, preferring to go on all fours, like a beast, instead of walking *upright as a man*, they would have been Lords still. It was their inheritance—because it is the law of the land. And are not poor men in England born with *inheritances*? Certainly they are! They are born with a right to *life*—they are born to inherit *freedom*. Their ancestors fought, and bled, and died, to procure it, and to transmit it to them. They are born exempt from punishment, except for crime;—they are born (at least they *were* born) to a right to their parochial relief which the Acts of Elizabeth assigned them, on the condition of their relinquishing depredation and vagrancy, and contributing, with all others, to the poor-rates then enacted."—*Mr. Samuel Roberts (of Sheffield)*.

"What is the principle of the New Poor-Law? The condition imposed upon Englishmen by that accursed law is, that man shall *give up his liberty to save his life*! That before he shall eat a crust of bread, he shall go into prison."—*Oastler's "Right of the Poor to Liberty and Life."*

"A man can no more make use of another's necessity, to force him to become his vassal, by withholding that relief which God requires him to afford to the wants of his brother, than he that has more strength can seize upon a weaker, master him to his obedience, and, with a dagger at his throat, offer him death or slavery."—*Locke*.

"The poor have a claim founded on the law of nature, which may be thus explained: all things were originally common. No one being able to produce a charter from Heaven, had any better title to a particular possession than his next neighbour. There are reasons for mankind agreeing upon a separation of this common fund, but this separation was made and consented to upon the expectation and condition, that every one should have left a sufficiency for his subsistence, or the means of procuring it."—*Paley*.

"The laws of this kingdom made sufficient provision for the supply of persons in necessity, by collections for the poor, and by the powers of the civil magistrates; and the Act of Elizabeth has reduced charity to a system, and interwoven it with our very constitution."—*Hale (his "Pleas of the Crown.")*

"The law not only regards life and member, and protects every man in the enjoyment of them, but also furnishes him with everything necessary for their support. For there is no man so indigent or wretched, but he may demand a supply sufficient for all the necessities of life from the more opulent of the community, by means of the several statutes enacted for the relief of the poor."—*Blackstone*.

"While that Act remains—the blackest, the foulest blot which ever disgraced the Statute Book of England—every vice will be nourished; Virtue will weep, and withdraw in sadness, and Disorder will assert his right to rule."—*Oastler's "Right of the Poor to Liberty and Life."*

"My Lord Duke, if that Bill passes, the man who can produce the greatest confusion in the country will be the greatest patriot, and I will try to be that man."—*Oastler to the Duke of Wellington*.

"There is a story told by a traveller in

Spain, of a female who, by a sudden shock of domestic calamity, was driven out of her senses, and ever after looked up incessantly to the sky, feeling that her fellow-creatures could do nothing for her relief. Can there be Englishmen who, with a good end in view, would, upon system, expose their brother Englishmen to a like necessity of looking upwards only, or downwards to the earth, after it shall contain no spot where the destitute can demand, by civil right, what by right of nature they are entitled to?"—*Wordsworth's Postscript to Moxon's Edition of his Poetical Works*. Published in 1837.

"Laws against natural justice are void in themselves."—*Chief Justice Hobart*.

"The law of England will not endure an absurdity."—*Lord Coke*.

"In the late years of Henry VIII. the royal prerogative was strained to a very tyrannical and oppressive height; and its encroachments were established by law, under the sanction of those pusillanimous Parliaments, one of which, to its eternal disgrace, passed a statute whereby it was enacted, that the king's proclamations should have the power of Acts of Parliament; and others concurred in the creation of that amazing heap of wild and new-fangled treasures which were afterwards totally abrogated."—*Blackstone*.

"In our criminal jurisprudence there is a maxim deservedly eulogized, that it is better that ten guilty men escape, than that one innocent person should suffer; so, also, might it be maintained with regard to the Poor-Laws, that it is better for the interests of humanity among the people at large, that ten undeserving should partake of the funds provided, than that one morally good man, through want of relief, should either have his principles corrupted, or his energies destroyed, than that such a one should either be driven to do wrong, or be cast to the earth in utter helplessness."—*Wordsworth the Poet*.

"Upon these two foundations, the law of nature, and the law of revelation, depend all human laws,—that is to say, no human law should be suffered to contradict them. Nay, if any human law should allow or enjoin us to commit moral guilt, we are bound to transgress that human law, or else we must offend both the natural and Divine."—*Blackstone*.

"The legislature is empowered only to make laws, not legislators, nor is the executive to govern otherwise than by promulgated and established laws, not to be

varied in particular cases, but to have one rule for rich and poor, for the favourite at court, and for the countryman at plough."

—*Locke*.

"The law of nature being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. No human laws are of any validity if contrary to this."—*Blackstone*.

"If authority may be given by the Sovereign to any Commissioner or other, to govern otherwise than by known and published laws, then the Sovereign confers a greater power than he himself possesses. And the Commissioners who do not administer justice by law, but by their own will, may seem rather to desire to be kings than to rule the people under the Sovereign; and in giving such authority, the king ordains, not subordinate magistrates, but absolute kings."—*Lord Bacon*.

"Laws incompatible with the constitution are in themselves void."—*Elements of Universal Law*.

"If it be not safe to touch the abstract question of man's right in a social state to help himself even in the last extremity, may he not still contend for the duty of a Christian government, standing in *loco parentis* towards all its subjects, to make such effectual provision, that no one shall be in danger of perishing either through the neglect or harshness of its legislation? Or, waiving this, is it not indisputable that the claim of the state to the allegiance, involves the protection of the subject? And, as all rights in one party impose a correlative duty upon another, it follows that the right of the state to require the services of its members, even to the jeopardizing of their lives in the common defence, establishes a right in the people (not to be gainsaid by utilitarians and economists) to public support, when, from any cause, they may be unable to support themselves."—*The Poet Wordsworth*.

"Where a great proportion of the people are suffered to languish in helpless misery, that country must be ill-policed and wretchedly governed; a decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization."—*Dr. Johnson*.

"The Ministry had enacted a sanguinary Poor-Law of the most horrible description, and to which they had most tenaciously adhered."—*Mr. Grimsditch, M.P. for Macclesfield, "Times," Sept. 1, 1837*.

"To the New Poor-Law Bill I entertain the strongest, the most firmly-rooted objections."—*Mr. Hinde, M.P. for New-*



castle-on-Tyne, "*Newcastle Journal*," July 29, 1837.

"The New Poor-Law could never be carried into effect in any large manufacturing town; and a law which could not be carried into effect must be a bad law."—*Mr. Muntz, M.P. for Birmingham, House of Commons*, July 9, 1840.

"The aristocracy should take warning from the increasing resistance to the New Poor-Laws. They have no right whatever, in justice or morality, to enforce these laws till the Corn-Law be repealed. It is nothing but tyranny to reduce a man to idleness, and then punish him because he cannot support himself."—*Tait's Magazine*, April, 1838.

"I cannot suppose, for a moment, that the framers and supporters of the Act foresaw the monstrous oppression to which it has already led, and must, if continued, further necessarily lead. Let me here ask, what would be thought of a Bill brought into Parliament for the express purpose of thus separating poor unfortunate workhouse inmates? Would it not be at once scouted with indignation? And does not an Act that *in fact* separates them, in its execution, equally deserve to be scouted? What will the rest of Europe think of England when this new workhouse system becomes generally known on the continent? That England, which has for ages boasted, that the rights and personal liberty of the poor man are as well protected there, as those of the rich! That England which once so proudly, but justly, boasted of the independent, praiseworthy pride with which her peasantry, and humble classes generally, spurned the thought of entering a workhouse as a disgrace in the last degree; an honourable pride, that every Englishman felt it to be a pleasure and his duty to encourage. Alas! these very classes are now invited, nay, compelled, to enter a workhouse, or starve!"—*The Author of "Sunday, a Poem."*

"Take the Bible in one hand, and that Devil's Book, the New Poor-Law Act, in the other; and I tell you, that if the one be true in its *principles and tendencies*, then the other is false! I am ready to meet you in any place, to prove this point:—

"The Bible teaches that the poor shall not be oppressed:

"The Act teaches, that they *shall* be oppressed.

"The Bible, that husbands shall cleave to their wives:

"The Act, that the Commissioners *may* separate them.

"The Bible, that they shall increase and multiply, and replenish the earth:

"The Act, that they shall be barren and unfruitful.

"The Bible, that the soul of one pauper is of more value than the whole world:

"The Act, that the souls and bodies of paupers are lighter than vanity, compared with the savings of a few pence.

"The two books are as much opposed as Heaven and Hell."—*Mr. Oastler, at Huddersfield*, Jan. 14, 1837.

"He had opposed the Mew Poor-Law, believing it to be harsh, unconstitutional, and unscriptural."—*Hon. W. Duncombe, "Evening Chronicle"*, August 7, 1837.

"I am opposed to the Poor-Law Bill as a measure fraught with cruelty and oppression to the poor, being satisfied of that fact from the attention I have paid as one of the *Guardians*."—*Sir William Jolliffe, M.P. for Petersfield, "Hampshire Independent"*, August 29, 1837.

"Is it not lamentable—is it not even marvellous—that the monstrous practical sophism of Malthus should now have gotten complete possession of the leading men of the kingdom! Such an essential lie in morals—such a practical lie in fact, as it is too! I solemnly declare that I do not believe that all the heresies and sects and factions, which the ignorance and the weakness and the wickedness of mankind have ever given birth to, were altogether so disgraceful to man as a Christian, a philosopher, a statesman, and a citizen, as this abominable tenet. It should be exposed by reasoning in the form of ridicule. Asgill or Swift would have done much; but, like the Popish doctrines, it is so vicious a tenet, so flattering to the cruelty, the avarice, and sordid selfishness of most men, that I hardly know what to think of the result."—*Coleridge*.

"Our palaced paupers, (whom God dooms he infatuates!) have enacted another law, the New Poor-Bill, by which they deprive their most helpless victims, the honest paupers, of the privilege of outdoor relief. These poor victims—who, if they were not robbed of half their earnings by one law (the Corn-Law), and, at the same time, deprived of employment, would need no relief at all—feel the horrible cruelty of this law, but perceive not its still more horrible inconsistency."—*Ebenezer Elliott, in "Tait's Magazine"*, April, 1838.

"All who wish to prevent revolution—all who wish to prevent anarchy and confusion—all who wish to preserve property

and life—ought, by all means, to exert themselves to upset this New Poor-Law.”—*Mr. John Fielden, M.P., at the Manchester Fielden Dinner, June 4, 1838.*

“The pauper *mittimus* act of general incarceration is even now almost a dead letter. Lord Brougham warned the Lords, when moving it, that if not passed, their estates, in the course of years, would be swallowed up in poor-rates. As a rider to his Lordship’s startling discovery, we will add a forewarning more startling still. Let the workhouse system be attempted now in the manufacturing districts, and then neither their lordships’ estates, nor Lord Brougham’s pension, will be found bargains too marketable at twelve months’ purchase.”—*Blackwood, March, 1837.*

“Recollect, that if in the supreme legislative power the abuse be enormous, nature will rise up, and, claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.”—*Dr. Johnson.*

“If a poor man, who is *not known*, applieth, saying, I am hungered, I pray thee give me that I eat, he shall *not be examined* to learn whether he be a deceiver, but food shall be instantly given to him.”—*Peppercorne’s “Laws of the Hebrews, relating to the Poor and the Stranger.”*

“It ought to be their (Englishmen’s) aim, therefore, rather to preserve the advantages and improve the forms of the excellent institutions they have inherited, than to *attempt, on a new basis, experiments in Government.*”—*Lord John Russell’s “Essay on the English Constitution.”*

“The pretended power of dispensing with laws, or the execution of laws, by regal authority, as it has been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal.”—*Bill of Rights.*

“As long, however, as the supreme power of the State is placed in the hands of one or many, over whom the people have no control, the tenure of civil and personal liberty must be frail and uncertain.”—*Lord John Russell’s “Essay on the English Constitution.”*

“The pretended power of suspending laws, or execution of laws, by regal authority, without consent of Parliament, is illegal.”—*Bill of Rights.*

“The commission for erecting the late Court of Commissioners for ecclesiastical causes, and all other Commissions and Courts of the like nature, are illegal and pernicious.”—*Ibid.*

“The town of Hamburg, which was followed by nearly the whole of the north of Germany, after many ineffectual attempts to meet the evil of pauperism, saw itself obliged, about the middle of the last century, to establish a system of Poor-Laws on the principle of our own. The principle laid down in the regulations is, ‘To allow no poor person to suffer from want. 1. To provide, though poorly, for the person who is incapable of all labour. 2. To supply the person capable of labour with work, or compel him to work. 3. To supply with pecuniary aid the person who cannot completely support himself with labour. 4. To place the bashful poor in a medium condition between privation and abundance.’”—*Hamburgh Paper, quoted in the Atlas, 1828.*

“The Bishop of Exeter contended, that such a proceeding as the separation of man and wife was illegal, and contrary to the decisions of the judges of the land. He would feel it his duty to put the question into a course of legal investigation either by *certiorari* in the Court of Queen’s Bench, or some other mode.”—*House of Lords, June 23, 1838.*

“Earl Stanhope then presented a petition from the Rev. Thomas Curtis, rector and vicar of Sevenoaks, who stated, that the defects which arose under the former law certainly arose from the maladministration of it, and therefore prayed that the present Poor-Law might be repealed.”—*House of Lords, March 19, 1838.*

“Absolute power annuls the public: and where there is no public or constitution, there is in reality no mother-country or nation.”—*Shaftesbury.*

“In what I have seen of the operation and mismanagement of the New Poor-Law, in Nottingham, during my office, and I have had a good opportunity of observing it, both during a time of great suffering from want of employment and since, I have compared it in my own mind to a mortal disease, working death in a variety of forms.”—“*Observations on the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham,*” by W. Roworth, Esq., Mayor, 1840.

“The hand of arbitrary power dare seldom enter this charmed circle, and *tear asunder* husband from wife, parents from children, brother from sister, as it does in *slavery*. Yet our New Poor-Law has aimed a deadly blow at this blessed security, and till the sound feeling of the nation has again disarmed them of this *fearful authority*, every poor man’s famil



is liable, on the occurrence of some chance stroke of destitution, to have, to their mortification, bitter enough in itself, the tenfold aggravation of being torn asunder and immured in the separate wards of a poverty prison. The very supposition is horrible, and if this system—this iron and indiscriminate system—a blind tyranny, knowing no difference between accidental misfortune and habitual idleness—between worthy poverty and audacious imposition—between misfortune and crime, be the product of philanthropy, may philanthropy be sunk to the bottom of the sea.”—*W. Howitt the Poet.*

“If the wealthy would make themselves acquainted with the poor in their distresses, the good effect would soon be seen. If our members of Parliament, during a prorogation, would *visit their poor constituents*, and make themselves acquainted with their real situation, and *learn from them* how the Poor-Law operates in times of depression of their labour, they would not find their poor constituents saying, ‘they suffered no more in times of extreme pressure, under the New Poor-Law than under the Old;’ on the contrary, they would give them such a ‘statement of facts’ as would make them careful how they voted for enactments upon the testimony of relieving officers, or any other paid servants.”—*Roworth’s Observations on the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham,*” 1840.

“The present power given to the relieving officer is very injurious to the poor; he has to see a great number of cases, both of sickness and destitution, and the relief of *so many* should never depend on *one* person. He, *by habit*, becomes so accustomed to misery, that he has no proper feeling to prompt him to relieve it: he is like the grave-digger, who removes the beautiful green turf, and with his spade works in the earth amongst the remains of those he once knew, without any feeling.”—*Ibid.*

“I cannot at present believe any sophistry can justify the present Poor-Law, and how clergymen can lend their sanction to it, with a good conscience, surpasses my comprehension.”—*Rev. A. S. Atcherson’s (Teigh Rectory, near Stamford, Lincolnshire) Letter to the Author,* Oct. 17, 1840.

“I hold the Poor-Law to be the most detestable and inhuman enactment, in spirit and in purpose, that ever passed into a law. That it has not been carried out universally in all its rigours, I deem to have

been a great evil, as the reaction on public opinion in that event, would have been so powerful as to have swept away the whole of its abettors, and have led to the adoption of better social arrangements, an event not now to be expected.”—*Extract of a Letter from T. Allsop, Esq. (of Cornhill), to the Author,* Sept. 16, 1840.

“I regard the New Poor-Law as the most portentous enormity of our times—except alone *the betrayal of the nation to its fiercest foe*; both springing from an indecision, or *declension*, of the national intellect and morals, which, in all ages and all times, has been the nurse of prodigies.”—*Extract of a Letter from Charles Attwood, Esq. (of Newcastle), to the Author,* dated Sept. 26, 1840.

“Both sections of the aristocracy have coalesced in support of that law, of which the strong and disgraceful proof was to be found in the division upon Mr. Walter’s motion; and latterly their sycophancy to the Crown on the framing measures for the increase of the burdens of the working people, seems to fortify the notion I have often harboured, that nothing short of a lick of the sabre will suffice to put an end to the spinning-jenny, red-tape system which has coiled itself round all the public affairs of our time.”—*Sam. Gordon, Esq. (Dublin),* Sept. 21, 1840.

“Suppose the multitude vote it *expedient* to wipe off all old scores with a rub of the finger: who can gainsay, who can plead in the name of justice for the vested rights of fundholders? *the New Poor-Law* at once ensures silence; it is a *precedent for destruction of existing rights.*”—*The Rev. Edward Duncombe’s (of Newton Kyme, Yorkshire) Pamphlet on Church Reform.*

“The people of England patiently endured, up to the enactment of the New Poor-Law, all the sufferings which war, taxation, and bad government, imposed upon them; for they always considered that they had legal protection against starvation! I therefore firmly believe—and I am by no means singular in that belief—that the old Poor-Law, from the justness of its principle, and in despite of the badness of its practice, has been the means of preserving the English people in a state of comparative comfort, tranquillity and obedience. It saved us from highway robberies and agrarian outrages.”—*Gen. Sir Charles Napier’s Letter to O’Connell.*

“It was a new system of legislation—a species of despotism, which it was his

internal conviction the country would never be brought to submit to.”—*Lord Abinger, Chief Baron of the Exchequer.*

“The working of the Whig Poor-Law is producing bitter fruits through the country. Cases of the most desperate hardship are constantly coming before the parish officers, which, by the New Law, they are destitute of all power to relieve, and the consequence is, that the miserable sufferers are driven from parish to parish, till they can be driven no more—and they die!”—*Blackwood*, March, 1837.

“Providence has so ordained matters in the world, that if we make the poor very poor, the rich shall not be very rich.”—*Sir Matthew Hale.*

“The interest of those who live by wages is as strictly connected with the interest of society, as those who live by rent.”—*Adam Smith.*

“Every industrious person has a right to be made comfortable in his own dwelling—himself and his family, and to be furnished with a cow, or a pig, or some other animal yielding profit.”—*Mr. Pitt.*

“I say, that *peace* at home, means *contentment* at home; and unless we can establish such a system of things as will afford men a fairer remuneration for labour, and enable the labourers to maintain themselves and families in comfort, there can be no peace at home; there never will be peace at home; there never ought to be peace at home.”—*Sir John Beckett's Address to the Leeds Electors, “Leeds Intelligencer,”* Jan. 10, 1835.

“A man must always live by his work, and his wages must be at least sufficient to maintain him; they must even, upon most occasions, be something more; otherwise it would be impossible for him to bring up a family, and the race of such workmen would not last beyond the first generation.”—*Adam Smith.*

“The basis of the English constitution, the capital principle on which all others depend, is, that the legislative power belongs to Parliament alone; that is to say, the power of establishing laws, and of abrogating, changing, or explaining them.”—*De Loime's Constitution of England*, chap. iv., p. 60.

“When the liberty of the subject is invaded, it is a provocation to all the subjects of England. A man ought to be concerned for *Magna Charta* and the laws; and if any one against law imprison a man, he is an offender against *Magna Charta.*”—*Chief Justice Holt.*

“Some also do grudge at the great

increase of people in these daies, thinking a necessary brood of cattell farre better than a superfluous augmentation of mankind.....But I can liken such men best of all unto the Pope and the Diuell.”—*Hollingshed*, vol. i., p. 308.

“Born and bred the son of a landlord out of Parliament, and bearing a name known to prove my position, all the lawyers and *Peelites* together cannot deceive me. This is the summary of all I wish to say on this point: the landlords made the Poor-Law Commission; the magistrates are landlords; the magistrates make themselves *ex-officio* Guardians; the landlords and magistrates have for years neglected their duties: as work is distasteful to idlers and drunkards, so they, ruling the law, depute a Commission to do their duty: the Commissioners undertake it on one plain and well-understood, though never expressed rule. It is, that successive ministers do their bidding, and all, whom the Government appoints magistrates, use their *ex-officio votes* as the Central Board directly, or indirectly, but intelligibly among *the party*, signify: and also, that all things with the leading tradesman in all boroughs be so managed, that those only shall be chiefly supported by them who support the friends of the New Poor-Law. So that landlords being magistrates, and magistrates *ex-officio* Guardians, and members of Parliament elected out of them, the wheel is complete. Go round on the circle which way you will, you will find LANDLORDISM is, as I say, the starting and ending point. I freely allow it is not a PARTY question *within* Parliament. Parliament itself is the party: call the New Poor-Law henceforth a CLASS question; for the two parties are THE CLASS *in Parliament* against THE CLASS *out of Parliament.* Deny it who dare: disprove it none can.”—*The Rev. Edward Duncombe's (Rector of Newton Kyme, Tadcaster, Yorkshire) Pamphlet, “Justice and Centralization; or, the Parson and the Constitution.”*

“‘Away with centralization,’ as said one who has more practical knowledge than half the House of Commons, and as much honesty as the whole: ‘they that pay the fiddler ought to choose the tune.’”—*Ibid.*

“The ancient laws, laws as ancient as the titles to nine-tenths of the estates of the kingdom, compelled certain officers to support the poor, and gave the magistrates the power and ministerial function of



seeing that those officers performed their duty. This Act compels no one to support the poor; it says, that certain individuals *may* give relief, but it does not say they *shall* give relief; nor does it empower any one to see that they do give relief. Is not this a total repeal of the poor man's rights and securities—rights and securities as sacred, as ancient, as fully recognized by statute, and by judicial authorities, as any right to property, to title, or to prerogative, possessed by the highest in the land?"—*Quarterly Review*.

"Let me exhort and conjure you, never to suffer an invasion of your political constitution, however minute the instance may appear, to pass by, without a determined, persevering resistance."—*Letters of Junius*.

"The laws which protect us in our civil rights, grow out of the constitution, and they must fall or flourish with it."—*Ibid*.

"Plutarch, disgusted with the callousness of heart of Cato, remarks, quite in the spirit of the Mosaic law, that a good man will take care even of his horses and dogs, when they are aged and past service. For his own part, he would not, he says, sell even an *old ox* that had laboured for him, much less would he, to make a paltry saving, remove from his *usual place*, and condemn to *coarser food*, a man grown old in his service. Plutarch, Cato, Dr. Kay, and Commissioners of Poor-Laws, belong to different categories of beings."—*Pep-percorne's "Rights of Necessity, and the Treatment of the Necessitous, by various Nations."*

"I have but one opinion of the New Poor-Law. It is one of those excrescences of a bad system which is used with many others to endeavour to conceal mismanagement. The present working of the Poor-Law is ridiculous, the great object was to prevent out-door relief being given; and where is the large town where such a practice can, or ought to be adhered to?"—*Mr. Muntz, M.P.'s "Letter to the Birmingham Council,"* Dec. 1, 1840.

"How the 'marble-hearted fiends,' who concocted this bill, could coolly look at their own handy-work, it is impossible for a person of ordinary feelings to conceive. To us it seems, that in speaking of this savage enactment patience would be a vice, and temper a weakness. We per force feel ourselves roused to that determination of resistance so finely depicted by glorious old Chapman in his 'Bussy D'Ambois,' when he exclaims—

'I am up,  
'Here, like a Roman statue, and I'll stand  
Till death hath made me marble.'

We feel it impossible that Englishmen can ever submit to such an enactment, and exclaim, 'With the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill war to the knife!'—*Samuel Roberts's "The Peers, The People, and the Poor."*

"Let our insane rulers have a care. If existence is indeed to be made a burden to the poor; there will be but one cry all over the country—which Heaven itself will then echo back—for universal suffrage. This awful consequence, with all the ruin it involves—we charge upon the New Poor-Law Act."—*"Church of England Quarterly Review."*

"I can remember when, half-a-century ago, this New Poor-Law would neither have been offered nor borne. I can remember a *tyrant* Tory, named William Pitt—ay, and I can remember a *liberal* Whig, named John, Duke of Bedford. Had that tyrant had the insane audacity to have proposed such an insult to the Englishmen of those days, that liberal ancestor of Lord John Russell would have publicly declared (as a noble legislator) that he would have his head—ay, and if I am not mistaken, he would have been enabled, almost unopposed, to have kept his word. But we had *men* as legislators then (the two mentioned being specimens of them), who knew and cared for the real interest of their country;—they were no drivellers—no place or pension hunters—no profligate spenders or pocketers of the public money—no puppies tied to the apron-strings of married ladies. Their cry was not, '*Oh, save their estates!*' but, with the latest breath, '*Oh, save our country!*' They were not men who, to add to their own superabundant store, robbed the poor of their paltry pittance. It is true that the Tory tyrant alluded to, like many other able, disinterested men of those days, strove to amend the Old Poor-Law, but the declared, as well as the real object was, to *increase the comforts of the poor*. When he found that it would not produce that effect, he relinquished it."—*Mr. Roberts's "The Peers, The People, and The Poor."*

"The triumvirate of Somerset-house—whose eye, like that of some old arch-spider, pervades this complicated web spread over the kingdom—may trust us, that, let the mind of man be ever so much inured to servitude, still there is a point

when oppression will rouse it to resistance; and the Government which abets these infamous doings, may depend upon it, that the instinctive feelings of nature will urge to some desperate effort; and *they* will cease to be restrained by legal coercion, who already suffer more than the utmost rigour of the law can inflict. The heart that is withered by persecution, obtains an awful emancipation from the ordinary restraints of human action; and when one-half of the population is rendered liable to that extremity, what is to be expected, but that the physical energies, inadequate to lay by a subsistence for old age, will, in the prime of life, take a destructive direction? Every drop of blood that will be shed, *we charge upon the New Poor-Law Act*. For every man who is not cut out for a tyrant or a slave, must know, think, and feel, that a people so cruelly scourged and oppressed, are justified in their resistance. We fear we leave our readers saddened by the perusal of this, but their melancholy hath its consolation. We leave them in the bosom of their families, presiding over the morality of the parental board. We are sure that they will form the young minds of the future nobility and gentry of England by their precepts, and we trust that they will confirm those precepts by their example. Let them instruct their children in the sublime institutions of that Redeemer who lived and died for them, and for all men. Show them how charity to the poor is part and parcel of Christianity; and when they shall be imbued with the doctrine and example of Jesus, recount to them the story of those hapless children,—their sire's murder,—their separation from their mother,—their pining at her loss,—their starvation, and their deaths. Then, readers, when you find your youthful auditory hanging upon your lips—their eyes overflowing with sympathy and sorrow, and their guileless hearts ready to burst at the picture of those martyred innocents, lighten up their little countenances, and make their eyes flash fire, by telling them that you had the boldness to denounce, *even at the footstool of the throne*, the reckless inhumanity of the New Poor-Law Act.”—*Church of England Quarterly*, Jan., 1838.

“Every individual who is withdrawn from a state of extreme indigence, is prevented from contributing his share to the diffusion of the habits from which a redundant increase of mankind arises. Suf-

fering among the poor, like contagious fevers, never remains stationary; if it is not checked, it spreads its ravages; if the rich will not relieve its distresses, they will speedily be made to feel its bitterness.”—*Alison's “Principles of Population.”*

“To reduce all stomachs of the same sex and age, to the same calibre, to reduce all habits, and skill, and tastes, to a few fixed occupations, is abhorrent enough to the variety of human nature; but to test all shapes and habits of the body and mind, all tastes and desires, and feelings, by the workhouse; to try all claims to relief by this assay, the measure of actual endurance from poverty by the capacity to bear this other endurance in the alternative—this is certainly one of the boldest and most fallacious attempts to enforce mechanical rule and contrivance upon human minds and motives that has ever been ventured upon by town-made politicians.”—*British Critic*, Dec., 1840.

“It is wretchedness that is so prolific; it is despondency that breeds so fast amongst us. Relinquish all national charity—resign all steady effort to uphold that class which is most exposed to adversity and least wise to guard against it; let them sink, and you will open the door of mere sensuality and despair to the offspring of men having all the recklessness of savages or wild beasts, and who yet live and multiply within the folds of civilization.”—*Blackwood's Magazine*, Dec., 1840.

“There are no measures so effectual in checking the growth of a redundant population, as those which relieve the present distress of the poor.”—*Alison's “Principles of Population,”* 1840.

“If then it come to that, that either the *poor* or the *peers* must perish out of the land, there is no alternative, for *God hath declared* that the poor shall never perish out of the land.”—*Mr. Samuel Roberts's “The Peers, the People, and the Poor.”*

“The cries of the poor ascend up to heaven, and call down vengeance from God. Cambyces was a great emperor; he had many lord-presidents, lord-deputies, and lieutenants, under him. It chanced that he had under him in one of his dominions, a briber, a gift-taker, and a gratifier of *rich men*. The just cry of a poor widow came to the emperor's ears; upon which he flayed the judge quick, and laid his skin in the chair of judgment. Surely it was a goodly sign, the sign of



the unjust judge's skin. I pray God, that—if need be—we may again see the sign of the judge's skin.”—*Life of Latimer.*

“A breach is made in the constitution—the battlements are dismantled—the citadel is open to the first invader—the walls totter—the place is no longer tenable—what then remains for us but to stand foremost in the breach, to repair it, or to perish in it? Unlimited power corrupts the possessor; and this I know, that where law ends, there tyranny begins.”—*The Earl of Chatham.*

“This is strictly congenial to the British constitution, which in its political, as well as its religious regulations, takes special care of the convenience of the poorer classes.”—*Wilberforce.*

“Whence is it that the crowds of unemployed poor have been generated, who now overwhelm the British empire? Is it in the workhouses of England, or among the numbers whom her vast parochial assessments have called into being, when the state of society did not require their production? It is, on the contrary, among the morasses of Ireland among those whom want and misery have driven from their homes, and who now seek, from the wealth and charity of Britain, that succour which is denied them by the institutions of their native land. It is amidst the indigence and misery of her *unrelieved poor*, that the principle of population has displayed its terrible powers; and from the squalid habits of her reckless inhabitants that the multitudes have issued, who now fill every part of the empire with distress. A more extraordinary, a more memorable example of the consequence of neglecting the poor, never has been exhibited in the civilized world. The system of repressing the numbers of the poor by depriving them of relief, has been tried to its fullest extent; for centuries misery and want have stalked through the land, and the redundancy of the people, as well as the density of the population, are in consequence now greater than in any country in the world.”—*Alison's “Principles of Population.”*

“Conservative leaders, Conservative gentlemen of England, before you take office, accept our honest, most disinterested, but soundly-based advice: look not at the rate-books only, but also to the poor—do not re-echo that most odious cry, ‘It works well,’ when you see the sum total of rates somewhat reduced. Gentlemen of England, be assured that nothing ultimately ‘works well’ in this

world which is not sanctioned by the Bible, and that most certainly the Poor-Law Amendment-Act is not. If the Conservative statesmen of England will amend the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, they will have the blessings of ‘God's poor,’ and the staid support of the people of the realm; but if, as has unhappily been the case on some former occasions, they prefer the smooth compliments of a smirking opponent, cunningly laying baits for their vanity, to the honest, unbought suffrages of their countrymen out of doors, then will they speedily again be driven from power notwithstanding all their dexterity in debate and divisions, and have upon their consciences the heavy load of having left undone that which they ought to have done, and had full power to do.”—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Dec. 26, 1840.

“Whenever the English people are resolutely so minded, they have ever, and we trust ever will, step in between an unduly severe law that encumbers the statute-book and its victims. The lines of blood and torture may be inscribed on some sanguinary page, but there they remain an inoperative dead letter. Neither do the executioners of evil laws long prevail against the aroused sense of Englishmen. Empson and Dudley have been kicked into the kennel only a few generations before the same fate will befall Mr. Edwin Chadwick, and the Commissioners whom he leads by the nose.”—*Ibid.*

“The New Poor-Law is not a question which necessarily involves a choice between Whig or Tory, Radical or Loyalist, but between justice and injustice, between those who would give a large and liberal construction to the commands of a merciful Creator, and those who would set up their own presumptuous philosophy, or their own rapacity, against the dictates of eternal justice.”—*Mr. Bowen's Letter in the “Times,”* Dec. 23, 1840.

“It must be a sorry day, when any honest Englishman, whose misfortunes were unavoidable, and who would blister his hands to support himself, should be compelled merely from the want of employment to consent to an imprisonment in a workhouse for life—at the same time separated from his wife and family. He believed and most conscientiously declared it to be his belief, that the object of the Poor-Law Commissioners was, the moment a man entered the workhouse, to

render him the most miserable man alive, with a view of driving him out of the house again.”—*Mr. J. H. Cutler, in the Birmingham Council*, Dec. 1, 1840.

“Cases of death by starvation never occur in Venice. Even during the great distress caused by the blockade in 1813, and the famine in 1817, no occurrences of this kind were known. In fact the more urgent the circumstances are, the more abundant are the subscriptions and donations.”—*Senior’s “Foreign Poor-Laws.”*

“It is high time for every man professing Christian principles, especially those who are the appointed, consecrated promulgators of the Christian faith, to ask themselves whether they can conscientiously approve of a law which is so administered as to violate the first rule of Christian charity? And I cannot but observe, that this cruel method of executing a stern law is no less stupid and impolitic than it is savage and abominable; for if it be carried on in this spirit, it is past all reasonable doubt that it must end politically in a regular *jacquerie*—that is, a systematic war of the poor against the rich; as it must end religiously in the total destruction of all Christian influence upon the poor; for it is absurd to suppose that they will listen to the doctrines of a religion whose principles they see practically despised by their betters.”—*“Letter to the Rate-payers of Eton,” by the Rev. W. G. Cookeley*, Jan., 1841.

“He said, then, that it was a coarse, cold-blooded Act—that it was based on ferocious and savage principles, and that it was calculated to lead only to the torture and grinding of the poorer classes—that it was calculated to make the muscle and bone of England strive against the Parliament, and he warned the House that if they tried to carry it out fully they would raise a spirit of resistance which nothing but force would be found effective to cure.”—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

“The Constitution at this moment stands violated. If the breach be effectually repaired, the people will return to tranquillity of themselves. If not, let discord reign for ever! I know to what point my language will appear directed. But I have the principles of an Englishman, and I utter them without fear or reserve. Rather than the Constitution should be tamely given up, and our birth-right be surrendered to a despotic Minister, I hope, my Lords, old as I am, that I

shall see the question brought to an issue, and fairly tried between the people and the Government.”—*The Earl of Chatham’s Speech on the Expulsion of Mr. Wilks.*

“Power without right is the most detestable object that can be offered to the human imagination: it is not only pernicious to those whom it subjects, but works its own destruction. *Res detestabilis et caduca!* Under pretence of declaring law, the Commons have made a law, a law for their own case, and have united, in the same persons, the offices of legislator, and party, and judge.”—*Ibid.*

“Nothing can be politically right which is morally wrong.”—*Charles James Fox.*

“For what purpose was the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill introduced? What object had its originators in view, in concocting the measure? It was certainly to benefit some one class of the community; but he maintained, that it was impossible for the honourable members who supported the Government measure to specify any one class who had been benefited by the alteration of the law. The condition of the poor had not been alleviated, and very little or no saving had been made in the parish rates.”—*The Hon. H. T. Liddell, House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

“The Revolution declared itself the enemy of Royalty and of Provincial institutions at the same time; it confounded all that had preceded it—despotic power and the check to its abuses—in indiscriminate hatred, and its tendency was at once to overthrow and to centralize.”—*De Tocqueville’s “Democracy in America.”*

“Whenever the heel of oppression is raised, trodden misery springs up, and glares around for vengeance.”—*Sheridan.*

“Superfluity will bear retrenchment, and that in proportion as it is superfluous: a bare subsistence will bear none. Take from a King’s brother half his income, he still remains an opulent prince. Take from an ordinary labourer half his income, he starves.”—*Bentham, on the Organization of Judicial Establishments in France.*

“With respect to the Bill, he could not help thinking that the Government would have to regret the steps they were now taking. There was much discontent in the country; and he regretted to see it had been fanned almost into a flame by the working of the New Poor-Law.”—*Mr. Grimsditch, House of Commons*, Jan. 29, 1841.

“He had always said, and he now said again, that it was, in every point of view, a most unconstitutional measure, at once



repugnant to the feelings, and habits, and opinions of the people at large, and calculated to undermine the best feelings, the morals, and the happiness, of the whole population of this country. He had opposed the Poor-Law Amendment-Act because he felt that it was not merely an experiment, but a most dangerous, and very rash experiment.....He thought Parliament had done a most dangerous thing in introducing so cruel an experiment..... He would support any motion for its repeal."—*Sir Francis Burdett, House of Commons, Jan. 29, 1841.*

"The poor are fast becoming a serious, a solemn charge. They have claims upon us far beyond mere alms-giving. They have claims upon our sympathies, our care, and, more than all, our respect. We hear, frequently, a talk of the rights of property: we never hear a syllable of the *rights of poverty*. Yet has it inalienable rights—rights awarded to it by the Giver of all good,—rights, that make misfortune an almost sacred applicant for our assistance—our earnest, and most impassionate consideration."—*Morning Herald, Jan. 19, 1841.*

"The King of England cannot alter the laws, or make new ones, without the express consent of the whole kingdom in Parliament assembled."—*Lord Chief Justice Fortescue's "De Laudibus Legum Anglie."*

"He knew many parishes in the country where, if they attempted to carry the regulations of the Board into effect, a rebellion might be the consequence, or something a great deal worse than the state of things in 1830. He could not avoid looking at the Bill with considerable alarm; and he voted for it, because he found no better scheme proposed, and he was not prepared to propose one himself. Some of the powers given by it were to be viewed with much jealousy and suspicion."—*Duke of Richmond, on the Second Reading, July 21, 1834.*

"The Government of England consists of three branches of the Legislature, by Act of Parliament, and the poor have as much right to be governed by Act of Parliament as the rich. The law of Commissioners must be a spurious authority."—*Letter from T. Lindop, Esq., to the Author, dated, Hanley, Staffordshire, Feb. 10, 1841.*

"The most dangerous rebellion is the rebellion of the belly."—*Lord Bacon.*

"That was a singular sort of merciful rigour, the application of which was con-

finied exclusively to the female, the vicious and profligate seducer being allowed to go unpunished."—*Bishop of Exeter, House of Lords, July 28, 1834, Committee on the Bastardy Clause.*

"Great as was the crime of incontinency, that of infanticide was a more serious offence; and could any noble lord be satisfied, on consideration, that the enactment of such a clause as that now under discussion would not tend greatly to the increase of that most serious offence."—*Lord Wynford, Ibid.*

"The object of the legislature ought to be, to endeavour to secure to the poor man a home.....Let him have a home which his wife might prepare for him and his children, on their return from their daily employment, with some degree of comfort, and where he could spend his evenings in domestic happiness. To talk of religious and moral improvement without that would be absurd.....Although he admitted that avarice had its rights, he did not forget that there likewise existed the rights of humanity, and those rights he felt should be respected."—*Lord Ellenborough, House of Lords, Debate on the Drainage and Improvement of Buildings' Bill, Feb. 12, 1841.*

"He opposed *in toto* the scheme of placing all the poor of the country at the mercy of this Central Board of Commissioners. The ground on which it was proposed was, to establish a uniformity of practice in the administration of the Poor-Laws; but that was impossible, for every parish would be administered according to its particular circumstances, and a Central Board could not prevent it. How could two out of three chief Commissioners, necessary to constitute a Board, examine and control the affairs of the 12,000 parishes in England?.....The Commissioners were to have much greater power than the legislature had ever been willing to intrust to the King, and these were not only to exercise this power themselves, but were even authorized to delegate it to others. There was no statute in existence which conferred any similar powers upon any set of men in this country.....Their salaries, too, were not fixed by the House of Commons. These were to be fixed by the Crown, by whom the appointments were to be made. Here were permanent appointments to be made by the executive, and the salaries named; which salaries were to be made good by the House of Commons. Carry that principle a little further, and there

would be an end to the constitution of the country.”—*Lord Wynford, on moving that the New Poor-Law be read that day six months, July 21, 1834.*

“He could not agree to the introduction of this system which had *no English name*; the French system of centralization was inconsistent with the genius, and incompatible with the prosperity of this country. How did it happen that this country, in spite of every disadvantage, carried on a commerce a thousandfold greater than any other nation in the world, and enjoyed unexampled wealth and prosperity? How was it that this country had been able to retain the possession of colonies larger in extent than the Roman empire, in defiance of the whole civilized world, which during the last war was opposed to her? The reason was, because the Government of this country had hitherto judiciously permitted every man to develop his talent in the manner he liked best. The country was intersected by canals and roads, covered with public works, and adorned by magnificent edifices. This would never have been the case, if every man who wished to make a road, or construct a bridge, had been obliged to submit his plan to a central board *des ponts et Chaussées*? Besides, he was perfectly convinced that the Poor-Laws, as they stood at present, would, if properly administered, remove all the evils respecting which so much had been heard, and which were, in truth, the effects only of the mal-administration of these laws.—*Lord Alvanley, Second Reading, July 21, 1834.*

“We objected to the appointment of the Commissioners, in the first instance, upon the broad principle, that taxation and representation ought to be co-existent—a doctrine inculcated, upon all occasions, by the Whigs themselves, but which was totally subverted when the New Poor-Law came into operation.”—*Sheffield Iris, Feb. 9, 1841.*

“I do not see any co-active necessity, that many should be without the indispensable conveniences of life.”—*Rambler.*

“He trusted that the more opulent, whatever their hopes might be, would feel that they could not exist in security and comfort, while they repelled their poorer brethren, drove them to a distance, and plunged them into the lowest abyss of misery. Society, he was convinced, could not exist, in this or any other country, unless by regular and uninterrupted gradations, from low to high, from humble to exalted; while the effect of the unnatural

New Poor-Law was to draw a broad line of demarcation—to place the affluent loftily above their brethren—to create a wide chasm between them and their laborious fellow-creatures. He repeated, that there could not and would not be this depression of the humblest, without the highest tumbling down with them. A man acquired confidence in himself from the verification of his past opinions; and there was not any dissatisfaction, turbulence, and rebellion, resulting from it, which he had not predicted, and all his predictions he had seen amply, and he would add painfully, verified.”—*Mr. Walter, Anti-Poor-Law Meeting, Crown and Anchor, March 11, 1841.*

“The project had failed in most parts of the kingdom. In small communities, unquestionably, they had driven the people away to die of want out of the house; but in more populous districts the experiment had signally disappointed the Commissioners; for there they dared not inflict the rigours which the law enjoined; there the workhouses had been crowded to repletion; and there they had been obliged to supply a miserable out-door relief, amounting usually to a loaf of bread, and 3d. or 6d. a-week. Now, originally, out-door relief to the able-bodied was expressly prohibited; that was one of the principles of the New-Law; whereas it was now well known that the workhouses had been so crowded, that the Guardians had been obliged to distribute out-door relief on the miserable scale which he had just described.”—*Ibid.*

“I abhor the New Poor-Law upon every ground that can be named. I do not believe in any respect that it is a just law. If a law had been passed with respect to the dogs kept in the kennels of the rich at all resembling that enacted for the poor—if their hounds were to be fed on so much water gruel a-day—what would have been the language of the aristocracy? Would they have been quiet and submissive under the control of a rascally commission sitting at Somerset-house? Would they not give them a full allowance of horse flesh to keep up their courage, and the sleek air they delight to see? Would they be coerced in such a matter? But what is their conduct with reference to the poor? These men sit as ex-officio Guardians, and when applications were made for an increased allowance to the poor, the proud, high-minded aristocracy, the nobles of this great country, so renowned over the face of the



whole globe, and who would show so much determination in any other case, absolutely stooped and bended to paltry Commissioners sitting at Somerset-house. When the poor ask these for relief, what is their answer? They say, 'It is our desire, we wish to do so from our hearts, but unfortunately the law is against it, and the three Commissioners will not allow it.'—*Mr. Wakley at Ibid.*

"The destitute are Nature's pensioners, and have a right to receive her pension free from any infliction of cruelty from the hand of man."—*Oastler's "Fleet Papers," No. 8.*

"The Poor-Law cannot be amended. It is an evil tree and must be plucked up by the roots and burnt. Nothing must be left behind. From first to last it is a law of fear and death. It has plagued the poor till their lives are so embittered, that they would rather die than live."—*Stephens's "People's Magazine," Feb. 1841.*

"The poverty and misery of mankind, in almost all parts of the globe, is no proof that population has a tendency to increase faster than capital has actually increased. To prove the existence of such a tendency, other facts must be supplied. It must be shown, not only that the labouring classes are generally in a state of misery and poverty, but that, from the time that capitalists and labourers became distinct classes, the misery and poverty of the latter has gone on increasing. Even this is not enough. When the fact of the constantly increasing wretchedness of mankind has been established, it is further necessary to show, that the increasing misery has not been produced by another cause, fully adequate to the effect; namely, by an increase in the ratio of population to the extent of the fertile lands from which erroneous legislation permits subsistence to be obtained. When we examine this question with the attention and accuracy which its great importance demands, and compare the motives which influence mankind in increasing their numbers, and in accumulating wealth, we find that, in almost every society, the tendency is not to increase population faster than capital; but, on the contrary, to increase capital more rapidly than population."—*Col. Torrens, Buckingham's "Parliamentary Review," May, 1834.*

"This Act has been called the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, but, from the instructions given under the hand and seal,

not of our king or of our queen, but of three kings, this is no law at all; it is a mortgage upon the wealth, the industry, and the labour of this country, to be dealt with according to the will and the pleasure of the three men sitting in Somerset-house."—*Mr. Feargus O'Connor, Bradford Anti-Poor-Law Meeting, Dec. 13, 1837.*

"Upon what principle is this Bill based? Why, upon the murdering principle of putting out of existence those who are no longer able to contribute their labour towards the luxuries in which the other part of the community rioted..... Ought not the poor to have some claim on the land in which they first saw the light?"—*Mr. Peter Bussey, at the Bradford Anti-Poor-Law Meeting, Dec. 13, 1837.*

"Does the new law draw the line of demarcation between the virtuous and the vicious, the deserving and the undeserving, when they are immured in the Bastile? No. Here you find that deserving old age, which has stood a series of calamities for nearly half-a-century, is compelled to mingle amongst the most vicious outcasts that have plagued society—and the treatment of the one is equally the same as the treatment of the other,—and both remain there as felons in a common gaol."—*Ibid., Dec. 13, 1837.*

"There was no doubt whatsoever that many cruelties had been committed under the existing law; neither did he, as a lawyer, entertain the slightest doubt that where the poor died in consequence of bad treatment, the offenders might be indicted for manslaughter or murder, according to the facts of the case."—*Lord Wynford, House of Lords, May, 1838.*

"He should like all the Poor-Law Commissioners to try the experiment of living upon bread and cheese and gruel for three months; and if at the end of that time they were satisfied with the condition in which they found their bodies, he would be satisfied with the condition of the labourers of England."—*Dr. Fletcher (of Bury) at the Fielden Dinner at Manchester, June 4, 1838.*

"He believed this Act never would give satisfaction to the people of this country. In the whole of its arrangement, in the whole of its spirit, in its entire mechanical discipline, it was utterly hostile to the best wishes and feelings of the people."—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

"Blessings be with them—and eternal praise."—WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS.

"———Hands that penned,  
And tongues that uttered wisdom—better none."—*Ibid.*

"Jack Ketch *may* be a man of some feeling, and stern necessity compels him three or four times a-year to deprive a single fellow-creature of life, but his task is executed in the course of a few minutes, and his victim's agonies are over. A Poor-Law Commissioner, on the other hand, must be a callous being who can sit calmly by and gloat on the contracted misery of thousands. For months and years he *voluntarily* gazes on the wasted and still wasting forms of the poor wretches whom he consigns to the care of his understrappers; and, by a refinement in cruelty, unknown in any other clime, calculates to a nicety the smallest quantity of the worst quality of food by which body and soul can be 'held together' for a given period! What cares he for the prayers of the distracted wife? What to him, are the remonstrances of the unfortunate husband? What influence is exercised by the tears of the orphans, rendered so by his instrumentality? These questions, I fondly trust, can be answered *only* at Somerset-house. The mother may address him in the words of a Scottish poet:—

'Can the fond mother e'er forget  
The infant whom she bore?  
Can its weak, plaintive cries be heard,  
Nor move compassion more?'

She speaks to marble. The pensioned dispenser of misery—the venal creature, whose vampirelike existence depends on the *amount* of privation to which he can subject the wretched and the poor—is deaf to the calls of humanity; and, deeming starvation too slight a punishment, he adds the horrors of solitude to the bitter draught."—*Dispatch*, April 29, 1838.

"I have no difficulty in believing the most horrible things that can occur as the results of this system, which to me appears to have been contrived with all the cunning that bad men could supply, and all the malignity that the evil spirit could superadd."—*The Rev. G. S. Bull's (of Bradford) Letter to Wharfedale*, August 22, 1838.

"Not a parish can meet without denouncing its atrocities—not a post arrives that does not cover our table with the

most affecting illustrations of its barbarity—not a street can we walk in without beholding the proofs of its demoralizing provisions—and not a newspaper can we read which does not teem with examinations, trials, and verdicts, exhibiting its odious brutality, insufficient medical attendance, repulsive workhouse imprisonment, inadequate and unwholesome diet, child-murders, vagrancy, robbery, and starvation, aggravated by official insolence and luxury: all these, we solemnly declare, constitute only the general heads—under each of which we could present illustrations of the most revolting and authentic kind, that would occupy our entire publication for nearly a month to come!"—*Editor of the "Metropolitan Conservative Journal,"* Nov. 19, 1836.

"It is against public policy and good morals to permit the separation of man and wife, even with their consent."—*Mr. Justice Bayley*.

"It is a great evil, even if tolerated by the statute law, to remove a wife from her husband, when the parties consent to such removal; it is unlawful altogether, without their consent."—*Lord Tenterden*.

"With respect to the Poor-Law Commissioners, I am decidedly opposed to the union of the legislative and executive powers, which it is proposed to lodge in them. This is a delegation of authority—a sort of '*imperium in imperio*,' I can never bring myself to allow."—*Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer*, May 12, 1838.

"If he was reduced to poverty, and was compelled to seek relief, before he would allow any person to separate him from his wife, he would either be killed or kill. He stood upon the throne, upon the word of God, and upon the institutions of his country, and no consideration should induce him to become either a traitor to the throne, a traitor to his God, or a traitor to his wife, by bowing with submission to the commands or dictates which the three Commissioners thought proper to set up. He would not—he defied them to do their worst, and he would infinitely rather ascend to Heaven



from a scaffold, speaking the truth, and maintaining the rights and privileges of every British subject, than he would take up his abode in the kennel on the other side the Strand, where the three-headed Cerberus daily and nightly set up its howl!"—*Richard Oastler, Freemasons' Tavern*, Feb. 19, 1838.

"The mischief that has grown to such a height from granting relief in cases where proper vigilance would have shown it was not required, or in bestowing it in undue measure, will be urged by no truly enlightened statesman as a sufficient reason for banishing the principle itself from legislation."—*Wordsworth the Poet*.

"My Lords, remembering who I am, and where I am, I have no hesitation in saying, that it is a law which the people, as Englishmen, cannot submit to;—it is a law which, as Christians, they dare not submit to."—*The Bishop of Exeter*.\*

\* In a speech delivered by Mr. Oastler at the Freemasons' Tavern, Feb. 19th, 1838, his lordship is made to say—

"It is a law which I am resolved I never will submit to. I am resolved to pay no rates raised under the authority of the Commissioners. I am resolved to denounce their authority in any and every way. I am prepared to go into a court of justice, and before twelve of my countrymen to be tried, for having declared that the laws of England were not to be made by three Commissioners."

Whilst this work was in progress, its author was honoured with the following letters from the Bishop of Exeter, in which his lordship denies having made use of the words in question.

(No. 1.)

"London, Aug. 1, 1840.

"SIR,—As you state that speeches of mine are among those which will be included in your work, I think it right to say, that there is one, which was seen by me in a memoir of my life, in the series called *Conservative Statesmen*, which was not made by me, and which I called upon the publisher of that work to correct. I know not whether he did so. It was a speech (probably made by some one else) in which I was made to say that I never would obey the laws of the Commissioners.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"H. EXETER.

"G. R. Wythen Baxter, Esq.

"P. S. My opinion of the *Poor-Law Act* continues what it has always been."

(No. 2.)

"Exeter, Sept. 8, 1841.

"SIR,—I rely on your not inserting, as mine, that speech which I told you in my former letter is erroneously ascribed to me in the *Conservative Statesmen*.

"I remain,

"Your obedient servant,

"H. EXETER.

"G. R. Wythen Baxter, Esq."

"And shall the Deity be so daringly insulted by the adamant-hearted legislators of our highly favoured England, by the enactment of a cursed Poor-Law Bill for the starvation and separation of husbands and wives? God forbid that any part of his Divine record should be legislated away, and made of none effect, by beings little better than fiends from the bottomless pit."—*The Rev. W. V. Jackson's Sermon on the New Poor-Law*.

"Who are the victims of this infernal New Poor-Law of yours, my lord? They are the worn out, honest, industrious labourers, who have contributed through life, to the support of great, lazy lubbers. They are poor afflicted creatures, male and female, whom it hath pleased God (we know not why) to afflict with mental and bodily diseases. They are poor infants and children, deprived of, or torn from their fathers, their mothers, and all their natural relations. They are, in short, my lord (I beg your lordship's pardon, you, perhaps, believe in no such person), those whom the *Lord of life*, when on earth, the most loved and the most cared for. These, my lord, your accursed Bill (which you are now going to revivify) consigns to close imprisonment, exclusion from worshipping God, to famishing and disease, to brutal violence, to horrible filth, and to premature death!"—*Mr. Samuel Roberts (of Sheffield) to Lord John Russell*.

"The legislature cannot transfer the power of making laws to any other hands. For, it being but a delegated power from the people, they who have it cannot pass it over to others.....The power of the legislature being derived from the people by a positive, voluntary grant and institution, can be no other than what that positive grant conveyed, which being only to make laws, and not to make legislators, the legislature can have no power to transfer their authority of making laws, and place it in other hands. The legislature neither must nor can transfer the power of making laws to anybody else, or place it anywhere but where the people have placed it."—*Locke*.

"My Lord Duke, if you pass that law, Apsley-house is yours now, but it may be mine hereafter."—*Oastler to the Duke of Wellington*.

"Anti-popular votes, such as those for the abolition of the old Poor-Law, that palladium of the poor man's social rights, and for the enactment of that barefaced imposture, miscalled the Poor-Law

Amendment-Act, are not calculated to curry-favour with those who are both insulted and aggrieved thereby.”—*Blackwood's Magazine*, April, 1837.

“The law which prohibited relief, where any visible property remained, should be abolished. That degrading condition should be withdrawn. No temporary occasion should force a British subject to part with the last shilling of his capital, and compel him to descend to a state of wretchedness from which he could never recover, merely that he might be entitled to a casual relief.”—*Mr. Pitt*.

“If the New Poor-Law remain unchanged, unmodified, the corn-laws cannot stand; to uphold them would be a paltering with principles which can meet no sympathy with us.”—*Blackwood*, April, 1837.

“The rules and orders of the Commissioners, under this Act, have an effect which is in opposition to the Christian religion—to its precepts which command us (*vide* 1 John iii. 17, James ii. 14—16) not to shut up our compassion from a brother in need—to the declaration of Christ, who says (Mark xiv. 7, Matt. xxv. 31 to the end) that we have the poor always with us that we may do them good, and who impresses upon us, that in the great day of account, one principal test of the sincerity of our Christian profession will be our tender regard to the poor.”—*The Rev. Mr. Bull's Petition to the House of Lords*.

“Great God! what a convulsion—what ruin—misery universal must be the consequence of heartless experiments for determining the extreme minimum of food upon which soul and body can be just kept from final separation!”—*Blackwood*, April, 1837.

“Now is the time to promote union, and cement harmony among and between all denominations of society; strike down the monster Poor-Law Abolition-Act—it will be acceptable as a peace-offering—the security of home and property will be fortified—the ‘flood of mutiny’ will be dammed and dried up at its source—contentment and concord will revisit the land. If not, worse may betide—we are yet only—in the beginning of the end.”—*Blackwood* for June, 1837.

“The decimating consequences of workhouse incarceration and workhouse starvation diet will be found cheerless and unfructifying economy, when corn-ricks are blazing, cotton-mills are fired, and the masses, manufacturing and agricultural,

with their Jack Cades and Wat Tylers at their head, are in open insurrection.”—*Blackwood's Magazine*, April, 1837.

“It cannot be expected of your petitioner that *he* should be contented with a statute, which operates to produce a separation amounting to a painful and ‘temporary divorce,’ when *he* has pronounced the marriage tie indissoluble except by death, and has challenged all men at their peril to put asunder those whom *he*, in God's behalf, has joined together. That, although the civil magistrate is competent by reason of commission of crime to separate the man and wife, yet poverty, which is not itself a crime, and which in general does not originate in criminal causes, ought not, and by Christian laws cannot, be treated and visited as though it were criminal, by ‘breaking up the cottage establishment,’ disposing of the cottager's goods for the benefit of the parish (*vide Commissioners' Third Report*), and inflicting upon such as have a right to be esteemed the best and most meritorious members of society, a set of barbarous regulations which have the effect of a penal statute. That your petitioner has solemnly engaged, before the Bishop who set him apart for his office, that he will take care for the poor, to the best of his power (*vide Office for Ordaining Deacons*), and he appeals to your right honourable House, that he should not fulfil that duty as a shepherd, if he stood by mute and unmoved, to see the flock drooping—driven from their homes—incarcerated in the sacred name of charity itself, and compelled to accept ‘relief’ by torture of their best feelings, and ‘relief’ by deprivation of their dearest liberties.”—*The Rev. G. S. Bull's Petition to the House of Lords*.

“Against the workhouse system our stand is determined.”—*Blackwood*, June, 1837.

“I trust that we shall henceforth see an end to legislation, by entrusting power to Commissions; we have already had enough and too much of them, they are not in accordance with the spirit of the constitution, and are fast tending to destroy that independent feeling and honourable desire to give gratuitous aid in support of all the institutions of the State, which hithertoforth formed such a distinguishing feature of our constitutional polity. I trust that we shall see our rulers adopt the only fair, manly, and constitutional course, standing boldly forward on their own responsibility, not



delegating their power to Commissioners or even to Committees.”—*The Duke of Newcastle’s “Thoughts in Times Past.”*

“The State owes to every citizen a proper nourishment, convenient clothing, and a kind of life not incompatible with health.”—*Montesquieu.*

“I reside in Morpeth, in the county of Northumberland. There has lately been a Union formed in this town, called the ‘Morpeth Union,’ embracing the town, and about 60 or 70 neighbouring parishes and townships. I was appointed a Guardian for the town of Morpeth, and from what I have seen of the working of this measure, I am fully convinced that a more cruel and inhuman Bill never passed the British House of Commons. I have seen the feelings of the aged and infirm wounded in the most brutal manner, and their pressing wants ridiculed and neglected. I can only in this brief note allude to the general working of the Bill; but I shall mention, that there have been two suicides of working men in this Union, from Poor-Law oppressions. The Board of Guardians of the same Union have, only a few days ago, resolved that the common decencies of Christian burial should not be given, as heretoforth, to deceased paupers.”—*Blakey’s “Controversial Letters with the Morpeth Board.”*

“I have repeatedly said the New Poor-Law and the ‘Regulations’ of the Commissioners are not only oppressively, but perfectly impracticable, impolitic, and theoretical. I have no doubt but the Commissioners act very much upon the suggestions of Mr. Edwin Chadwick, their Secretary, who, I understand, at the death of Jeremy Bentham, was made his executor, and by which he received some eight or ten manuscripts relative to the maintenance of the poor, founded upon Utopian principles, evidently introduced into the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. Be that as it may, I will venture to suggest that it is fallacious almost from beginning to end. What will prove my assertion more than the indisputable fact, that the Commissioners have completely failed in proposing to act upon one ‘uniform system.’ The thing may sound pretty well, but how can it be practised? To talk also of so doing away with out-door relief, how can it be done? It is to those who know something about the relief of the poor, perfect nonsense. To make general regulations at Somerset-house, and tell us that it is better than permitting the Guardians of the different localities (who

examine the various cases, and know something probably of each) a discretion to act as they may think best for all parties,—to say so is a libel on common sense. To say that no distinction shall be made between the virtuous and the vile, is what the Guardians will never act upon, and what the poor will never long submit to. To attempt to make workhouses prisons, and so punish poverty as a crime, is what Englishmen (thank God!) are not prepared for. Witness, how I am completely borne out in this fact by the long list of Metropolitan Unions, published this week, who, perfectly regardless of the ‘orders’ of the Poor-Law Commissioners to the contrary, have given to their workhouse inmates beef and pudding and porter, yes, and a day’s holiday, to commemorate the festive season of the year. See, in this simple fact, the utter impossibility and the stupidity of attempting to carry out a law opposed to the will, the wishes, the feelings, and the common humanity of our nature. The thing is impossible. The attempt will fail. So this Poor-Law and all the regulations of the Commissioners are fast becoming the scorn and derision of all free and independent men in the community. They are becoming every day less able to enforce any one of their regulations.”—*Mr. John Day’s Letters to Lord John Russell.*

“Notwithstanding all that can be said against this most cruel and oppressive law—a law altogether repugnant to every principle of humanity, and at variance with the whole spirit of the Bible, it is nevertheless frequently said, ‘Oh, the law works well.’ But in what respect it works well I cannot imagine, and whether the observation is meant for the rich or poor I cannot tell. Let us, at one glance, see for which of the two classes it works well. It works well for the poor:—In depriving them of their liberty, and in putting nearly one hundred together in a ward, of different tempers, habits, &c. In separating man and wife, parents and children. In giving them bread that many can scarcely eat, that some cannot eat, and gruel that all loathe. In shutting up females, at the risk of their lives, in a cold, damp cell, for trifling offences, for twenty-four hours together. In making females to pick oakum all the winter through in a cold out-house without any fire in it, and in sending to the treadmill those who, under these circumstances, object to pick the same. In giving an

opportunity to the merciless to beat most cruelly infants with impunity. In keeping in office drunken schoolmasters who break the children's heads. In forcing into the Houses young widows with children, instead of making them a trifling allowance. In subjecting those who cannot submit to imprisonment to the greatest possible deprivations. And in greatly increasing crime. It works well for the rich—in making the rates very much higher than formerly. We see then, that the only persons for whom this wicked law can possibly be said to work well are the Commissioners, Assistant-Commissioners, and their clerks.”—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath)*, Sept. 15, 1840.

“Poor men may be led through any hardship almost, but they will not be driven for ever; they are cowed down now; but there is a point beyond which human nature cannot be made to depress; and that is every day hastening upon us, and when the day of reckoning shall come, the cry amongst the present supporters of the law will be, ‘who could have thought that so *benevolent* a measure could bring about such cruel results?’ It is formed contrary to human nature, and can never stand, I will defy it! ay, more, I will defy a people like the English to wish it to stand!”—*The Suffolk Juror*.

“There is little need of a conspiracy to obstruct the Poor-Law in the south of England. Its unworthiness is virtually admitted by those employed to carry it into effect. Our readers are already aware, that out-door relief has been sanctioned by the Commissioners in several Unions; and the week presents an instance of the utter failure of the new system in a populous district in Wiltshire; where the labourers with their families preferred the workhouse fare to wages at 7s. a-week, with bread at the present high prices. They demanded admission in considerable numbers; and, as the accommodation in the workhouse was sufficient only for a portion, the old system was resorted to.”—*Spectator*, Jan., 1839.

“The New Law is only calculated for ordinary times, and then when workhouse fare is superior to what industrious persons can procure by independent labour, the much vaunted ‘test’ fails.”—*Morning Chronicle*, Jan., 1839.

“The New Poor-Law stands forth in all that hideous deformity which at once disgraces a Christian country, and is discreditable to the legislature of a so-called

free people; proclaims the cruelty and cowardice of its concocters, and entitles them to the hatred of every philanthropist. It is ‘cowardly,’ because it gives powers which its authors were afraid to embody in the clauses of the ‘Act’ itself; and ‘cruel,’ because it punishes poverty as a crime, subjects the poor to a treatment worse than criminals, makes *poorer* the poor, and leaves them to the mercy (!) of their tyrant masters!”—*Anti-Malthusian Bloodsucker, in the “Manchester Advertiser,”* Sept. 19, 1840.

“Let Englishmen, tax-payers and rate-payers, see how they are degraded under this New Poor-Law, and say, will they be content that this scheme of wholesale taxation, without representation, should continue any longer? and will they be satisfied that their lawful and ancient right to control the expenditure of their own funds shall be taken away for ever, and that the comforts—and even the lives—of their poor, shall be placed in the hands of a set of theoretical speculators, hired Government officers, who are to them comparatively aliens and foreigners, instead of neighbours and friends?”—*Day’s “Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law.”*

“We know that God has not left one man so to the mercy of another, that he may starve him if he please.”—*Locke*.

“The State is bound to supply the necessities of the aged, the sick, and the orphan.”—*Montesquieu*.

“The legislative power hath no other end but preservation, and, therefore, can never have a right to destroy, enslave, or designedly to impoverish the subjects... Absolute arbitrary power, or government, without settled standing laws, can neither of them consist with the ends of society.”—*Locke’s “Treatise on Government.”*

“In all tyrannical governments, the supreme magistracy, or the right both of making and enforcing the laws, is vested in one and the same man, or one and the same body of men; and wherever these two powers are united together, there can be no public liberty.”—*Judge Blackstone*.

“Laws human must be made according to the general laws of nature, and without any contradiction to any positive law in Scripture; otherwise they are ill made.”—*Hooker’s “Ecclesiastical Polity.”*

“The suspension of that valuable law (the Habeas Corpus, which was suspended in 1817) was not only unconstitutional, but those who had been instrumental in



this instance in attacking the liberties of the people, *ought to have been punished*. .....The practising of such things by a Government, and the submission of the people to them, must, in the end, bring about such a state of political excitement, as would leave the people no other alternative but base endurance, or *forcible resistance*.”—*Lord Grey's Speech at a public Meeting at Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1819.*

“Find employment for such as are able to work; and this principally by providing stocks to be worked at home, which perhaps might be more beneficial than accumulating all the poor in one common workhouse; a practice which tends to destroy all domestic connexions, the only felicity of the honest and industrious labourer, and to put the sober and diligent upon a level, in point of their earnings, with those who are dissolute and idle.”—*Blackstone.*

“The separation is contrary to all law; for there are more than a score of decisions of judges, that the separating of man and wife is unconstitutional and unlawful from the very nature and offices of society.”—*Blakey's “General Principles of Parochial Relief.”*

“No free man shall be taken or *imprisoned*, unless by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.”—*Magna Charta.*

“Never join in, or give countenance to, the silly talk of this infamous Bill being more necessary or advantageous to the South than to the North. There is injustice as well as silliness in this opinion. You cannot but admit, that it must be as painful for a man in Devonshire to be parted from his wife and family as it is for a native of Northumberland or Durham; and that the former has as keen sensibilities to the thousands of outrages to his feelings and domestic comfort which this Act must, in its very nature, inflict upon him, as the latter.”—*Blakey's “General Principles of Parochial relief.”*

“If there is a man who has no home, that man has a just cause for quarrel with society. Every man without a home, and whose home is not all that God meant it to be, is robbed.”—*Rev J. R. Stephens's London Sermon, preached May 12th, 1839.*

“Society can have no right or power to shoot or hang a man because he is in a poor and destitute condition; and what the law of reason forbids you to do *directly*, it equally forbids you to do *indirectly*, by

placing a man in a situation, on account of his helpless condition, where his death becomes sure and inevitable.”—*Blakey's “General Principles of Parochial Relief.”*

“The old Poor-Law recognized the right of every man in times of distress, and in circumstances of poverty over which he had no control,—established the clear, indefeasible right of every such man, to a maintenance out of the property of the country. But what does the New Poor-Law? It throws every man upon his own resources! It says to the working man, ‘Let your wages be never so small—let your employment be never so laborious, you may work 18 or 20 hours a-day—you may exhaust your strength in procuring food and clothing; but if you fail in doing that, though you have no command over wages, yet you shall have no relief in this country, out of a prison.’”—*Mr. John Fielden, M.P., at the Manchester Fielden Dinner, June 4, 1838.*

“I defy you, my Lord, with all the wealth and power of Britain, to maintain the crown on Victoria's virgin and honoured brow, or the coronets on the dunceheads of the peers, or the rents in the hands of the landlords, or the wealth in the miser's coffers, along with the damnable, the devilish, the Anti-God New Poor-Law. You will find me right in the long-run! my Lord.”—*Oastler's Letter to Lord John Russell, Nov. 27, 1838.*

“I hate the New Poor-Law, because it establishes a dangerous and unheard-of authority in this country. I hate it for its principle of centralization, and for its ramification of servile agents. I hate it, because it supersedes the authority of the magistrates and clergy. I hate it, because it deprives the rate-payers of essential control over the application of their funds. *But above all I hate it, for its mockery of charity, and for its injustice: its injustice, because the evil-disposed and the well-disposed paupers are treated alike: its mockery of charity, and injustice, because the acceptance of relief is accompanied with subjection to degrading conditions; so that the honest and deserving labourer will be the last to receive it: and men of any spirit will be exposed to suffering and famine, or will prefer to commit crime; whilst the vile, only, will submit to such illiberal and disgusting conditions. I hate it, also, for its disrespect of the clergymen, and of social and moral ties, in separating parishioners from their pastors, neighbour from neighbour, married couples from each other, and children from their*

parents."—*Mr. John Perceval's Letter to Mr. Oastler*, Feb. 6, 1838.

"If you refuse the able-bodied pauper relief from the fund for the poor, you will have to provide for him from the fund dedicated to the maintenance of criminals. The pauper will not starve; and what you refuse to give, he will take: for this you will send him to the House of Correction. This House of Correction is maintained at the public charge, and the prisoners must be fed. Do what you will, talk as you will, there is no escaping from this difficulty."—*Tait's Magazine*, Feb., 1834.

"I have read this report (of the Poor-Law Commissioners) with the most horrible disgust: it is a lie against God and the poor."—*Michael Thomas Sadler*.

"If any man, from no fault of his own, in extreme want of victuals and clothing, cannot obtain from those richer than himself, either by entreaties, or by some payment or other, or by his labour, that which he needs, he is by no means guilty of theft or felony if he takes them, either by force or privately."—*Puffendorf*.

"J. S. Smith, Esq., rose to propose a series of resolutions expressive of the opinion entertained by the vestrymen of this parish in reference to the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill proposed by Lord Althorp, many of the obnoxious clauses of which, his Lordship had said, would not be enforced. Where then was the necessity of passing such a measure? He believed, if it were once passed, the Commissioners would enforce every part of it with the utmost rigidity. (Hear.) One of the clauses empowered the Commissioners to make new regulations, subject only to the approval of the Secretary of State, and to convert the provisions of any act of Parliament which might suit them to their own purposes; in fact, the object of the Bill seemed to be to destroy all local jurisdiction in matters relating to the poor. To be sure, the Board of Guardians might review the propositions of these Commissioners, but the latter had the power of moulding the former to their own liking, so that the Guardians would be the mere tools of the Commissioners. (Hear.) By the 19th clause, power was given to alter and enlarge parish work-houses, and to call upon the Guardians to pay the expense, while they were limited in their resources. Sir James Scarlett drew the attention of Lord Althorp to this point, and his lordship replied, that it meant to give them power only to lock up

a door. Was not that absurd? The Commissioners, if they pleased, would add extensively to the building. One clause provided for the union of different parishes, for the purposes of settlement and rating. Did not this betray an act of injustice. A petition from the parish of Bethnal-green, which was very poor, had avowed that it would derive great benefit from being united to a richer parish. He would not object to a general metropolitan rate, but first let the debts of each parish be paid by itself. Unfortunately, not half the members of the House of Commons were practical men, and, therefore, it was not unfair to suppose they had not waded through the voluminous report of the Commissioners: though that report detailed much absurdity and mismanagement on the part of many country parishes, those facts did not prove that the present system was bad, but that it was badly administered. Government had no right to call upon the parishes to submit to the control of the proposed Commissioners unless the consent of the assembled vestry of each parish was first obtained. (Hear, hear.) To exclude lunatics from poor-houses was a great hardship, for many of those unfortunate beings were perfectly harmless. He was satisfied that the intended alteration in the Bastardy laws would only increase the number of illegitimate children. (Hear.) Why were the metropolitan parishes to be saddled with this arbitrary, unjust, injurious measure? Only because some country parishes had mismanaged their affairs. A sample of this management he would just quote from the report of the Commissioners. In one parish the overseers' accounts contained entries, without date, like the following:—'For catching two dozen sparrows, 2s.' 'For catching a hedgehog, 4d.' 'For going to prevent a marriage, 1s.' 'To William Bugden, for bringing good news, 2s.' 'For looking out for a bastard child, 2s. (Laughter.) This occurred in a parish near Coventry; and he would ask if the rate-payers were such fools as to endure such things, were those who looked after their affairs properly to be punished by Lord Althorp's Bill for their folly? (Hear.) The parish of White-chapel was in comparatively easy circumstances, but this Bill would involve it in new difficulties, and therefore it was not wanted. (Hear.) The expenditure in this parish in 1824 was £9,000, but in 1833 it was only £6,000. This improved state of things was owing to the persever-



ance of the parochial officers, assisted by the magistrates of the district. The really necessitous were duly relieved, but able-bodied impostors found no encouragement. What more could be desired? The Commissioners reported, that illegitimate children were only paid for in proportion to their charges at the rate of 50 or 80 per cent. In this parish there were at present ninety-two illegitimate children; they cost last year £318, and the actual receipts amounted to £168. The Commissioners stated, that the parishes could not make any new regulations. This he denied, for the vestry had power to do so at all times, consistent with the public benefit. He would conclude in the words of the *Times* respecting another Commission—"This Commission will only add another to the pompous, costly, and burdensome establishments which have deluged the country so long."—*Vestry Meeting, St. Mary's, Whitechapel, June 5, 1834.*

"The labouring classes always suffer privations. If the rich are just towards them they are content and social; they feel that God hath made them poor and they do not repine; for, as our Saviour affirms, they are more religious and more moral than the rich. In consequence of possessing their rights, they become more noble in their thoughts and in their deeds. But if the rich educate the multitude, and, while they teach the poor man to estimate his rights, teach him also to see that he is deprived of them; if, while the rich do this, they expect the poor to suffer in patience, not what God inflicts, and with it sends the power to bear; then do the poor feel vilified and injured; they become base and revengeful; fear may long prevent open violence; but it generates hypocrisy and all that demoralization which renders man devilish and dreadful. To bestow upon man his rights, and instruct him how to value and use them, is to cultivate all the nobleness of human nature. It is a fearful thing so to depress men as to impoverish them, and at the same time so to cut off relief, that they are driven to revolt. Wo to those who push a people to such straits, for the state of society then becomes indeed deplorable. Men who succeed in seizing their rights by force have seldom any regard for the rights of others; they are filled with a spirit of vengeance, and, in the fulness of success, they themselves become despotic tyrants; if they fail in the struggle they sink into hopeless baseness. Governments should have that

moral courage which makes them boldly just. It is not men who receive justice, but those who are denied it and take it, that are to be feared. Why will not Governments see that their force to hold the multitude in subjection is quadrupled by giving men their rights? To do this, renders the power of a Government gigantic. To refuse to do this, gives to it the feebleness of decrepitude, and to its thus created foes the fierceness of the tiger with the strength of the lion. To oppress and deny the people justice, is to drive them to revolt; it may come sooner or it may come later, but that result is as certain as that night follows day."—*General Sir Charles Napier.*

"The last riveted link in the chain of slavery is, that which deprives a man of his right of (unoffendingly) worshipping and obeying God in the way which his reason and conscience dictate. This is the link which is by this accursed law sought now to be riveted. Against this attempt it is the bounden duty of every true Christian, in one way or other, to '*cry aloud and spare not.*' The doing of this by no means necessarily implies a turbulent spirit, or ill-will to any one; on the contrary, I am sure, that, in this instance, it is accompanied with universal love and charity. Living under this accursed, impious triumvirate is living at the peril of fine and imprisonment; under it true Christian subjects of this land of boasted freedom dare not to obey the most clear and explicit, essential commands of their Saviour."—"The Paupers' Advocate. *A cry from the Brink of the Grave.*" By Samuel Roberts, (of Sheffield), 1841.

"Could all the instances of the dreadful sufferings which ever have been brought, and authenticated, before the public (the consequence of this law), though probably not a ten-thousandth part of those which have really been inflicted and endured—they would fill more and larger volumes than even those enormous ponderous books of the poor-calumniating Commissioners, concocted by order of our rulers, to induce the rich to consent to the utter spoiling of the poor. The most gloomy and fertile imagination could not have conceived, I think, any legislative measure so stupidly insane, so unjust, so impolitic, so ferocious, cruel, and wicked, as the proceedings leading to, and connected with, the New Poor-Law."—*Ibid.*

"I do earnestly hope the public voice will be raised upon this subject, from

North to South, from East to West, of this kingdom,—now, at the proper time, and in the proper manner. It is a vital question, as regards the peace and prosperity of the kingdom; for there is more depending upon the settlement, satisfactory or otherwise, of the New Poor-Law, than upon any question of domestic and internal economy, which has ever been brought before Parliament within my recollection. It is not enough that the question be settled; it must be settled satisfactorily, at least in a great degree more so than by the first attempt. The opponents of the present law are not a handful of grumbling lovers of antiquated systems, who would oppose all amendment and hinder all reformation. They do not consist either of the merely discontented of the lower classes, or the prejudiced partizans of the higher. Their opposition is not only to details in practice; it is a struggle in defence of a great principle; that principle is charity; not the niggardly doling out of support for animal existence to the destitute, as might be justified by stern and unavoidable pressure of poverty throughout all ranks of the people; but the principle which under that name constitutes the tie and bond of all social connexion between man and his fellow-man—a principle whose spirit ought as dearly to be recognized in the legal provision for destitute poverty by the state at large, as in the administration of charitable beneficence in private, or in combination with others apart from Parliamentary interference,—that principle which lays down this rule for itself, that the administration of relief to the unfortunate and the destitute shall never be rendered painful to the recipient, by conditions which at once degrade his character in his own eyes, and in those of his neighbour, and thus unnecessarily wound his feelings; or, what is worst of all, leave to the sober, industrious, respectable poor man, only the alternative of submission to disgrace or starvation in silence. This is the only principle of a poor-law to which I can assent, because it is the only one which the law of God, or my duty to my neighbour, admits of. If it be denied to the poor, as it is now by many, that they have an abstract right to a maintenance out of the superfluities of enormous wealth, such as this country can boast of (a right which in feudal times was admitted and acted upon, whilst in these days of emancipation it appears the responsibility of the wealthy has disappeared, with the

bondage of the serf), they have at least a right to claim that, what relief they do receive from the state in its character of universal parent, shall be free from any circumstances which bring upon them insult and needless suffering in addition to their poverty.”—*Sir George Crewe's Address to his Constituents of South Derby*, Feb., 1841.

“As far as my experience extends, as Rector of a parish containing a population of 2,181 souls, I *know* that the poor have not right, and never *can* have it, under the operation of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, as it now stands. I know this, and I am ready to prove it before any tribunal, excepting, however, a packed committee of the House of Commons, and a Board of Guardians with closed doors, and a Poor-Law Commissioner as their counsel. I know, for instance, that many labourers have necessarily been out of employment in my parish, week after week, during this intense frost. I know that their families have gone through hardships which most people would consider intolerable, but which very possibly may not have exactly reached the *extreme point of destitution* which, according to the *dura ilia* of Lord John Russell, Lord Radnor, and the Poor-Law Commissioners, might have entitled them to relief; and, notwithstanding that private charity and a public subscription have done much to mitigate their distress, I know that many families in this parish have suffered during the long protracted inclemency of the weather both from want of food and fuel. Some of them who had not yet learnt, by a refusal of relief, the severity of the law, and who, in the fond hope of *some* assistance during *such* weather, applied to the Board of Guardians, were of course offered ‘*the house*.’ But no, they had rather satisfy their hunger with one scanty meal of potatoes per day, they had rather starve, they had rather drop in the streets, than enter that house, and be parted from their wives and children. And *they remain out, and suffer cold and hunger!* But is there nothing else that they do? Is there no temptation to them to put forth their hands and steal? or, if they have the fear of God or of punishment to restrain them, are there no thoughts of bitterness in their hearts against their superiors? ‘What have I done?’ may the honest and hard-working man in such circumstances exclaim, ‘what have I done to deserve such treatment at my country’s hands? Has not my honest labour been given to her for many a-year,



and has she ever found me unwilling to work when there has been work to be done? Have my wages of 9s. or 10s. a-week, with a wife and four or five small children to support, and with bread and every kind of provisions at high prices, enabled me to save anything for this period of necessity? I have never frequented the beer-shops; I have always behaved myself lowly and reverently to all my betters; I have sent my children to school with regularity; and I myself have been constant to church. Why should I be denied a little assistance for a *little* while, until I can return to my work? Why should I be compelled to go into the 'House,' and be parted from my wife and children, and be condemned to keep company with the vicious and depraved, and to be vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked?' I know that these are the feelings of *many an honest and industrious labourer*; and those ministers who have large parishes where the workhouse test has been applied, and who visit their people and converse with them, must know the same. And will Lord John Russell tell us that a law, which proposes a house without *moral* classification to *such* men, and which pretends to test their destitution by an offer of relief upon such terms, is a most humane and benevolent law? No, my Lord, call it by its proper name: it is a most inhuman, ungenerous, uncharitable, un-English and un-Christian law.—*The Rev. William Brock's (Rector of Bishop's Waltham, Hants.) Letter in the "Times,"* dated Feb. 11, 1841.

"To my mind, the most alarming characteristic of the New Poor-Law is its tendency to estrange the people from the church and the religion of their fathers. Sir Robert Peel has expressed his disapprobation of that clause in the Bill now before Parliament, which relates to the attachment of burial-grounds to the workhouses; and well he may, for the proposition of the Commissioners to dis sever the poor from their ancestors in death is as barbarous and revolting, as the excuse attempted for it by Lord Howick is hollow and pitiful. But if that hon. baronet knew what a blow has been levelled against the church by the New Poor-Law, and how that measure is every day embittering the minds of the labouring classes against their superiors, he would have demanded that their feelings should not be outraged while they live, any more than their remains insulted when they die. I solemnly declare, that I do not believe that

anything has tended more to alienate the minds of the poor from the church and the aristocracy of the land than the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. Time was, when the applicant for parochial relief was wont to look up to the minister as a powerful friend, and to the magistrate as an equitable judge: but now he perceives that the minister and the magistrate are alike powerless, and he is apt to conclude, not so much that they *cannot*, but that they *will not*, help him. By this, in conjunction with the Marriage and Registration Acts, the parochial system, hitherto so powerful a means of binding the affections of the poor to the church, has been invaded; the Union has taken the place of the parish; and the tie which used to unite our people, by every happy and hallowed association, to the House in which their fathers worshipped, and round which are their fathers' graves, has been weakened. The end of these things can be nothing but evil; would that the professed friends of the institutions and religion of the country would consider it! To adopt the language of one of old, while speaking of the national judgments which he dreaded for his people, 'O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!'—*Ibid*, Feb. 18, 1841.

"Of all the destructive laws that ever were invented—of all the sanguinary laws that ever were framed—he believed that the equal of this law had never been designed or concocted by human being. (Hear, hear.) It was but seldom that he spoke upon this subject out of that House, but he could not relate the thousandth part of what he had witnessed with regard to this detestable law. He wished that the House could hear the expressions used by jurymen, with reference to themselves and their legislation, when they witnessed the appalling instances in which those feelings were sacrificed, which ought to be cherished by every human being. Was it their intention that a man should be punished because he would not go into a gaol for them? He would not call the workhouse by any other name than a gaol. It was a gaol, and a particularly odious one. (Hear, hear.) From what he had seen of houses of correction and workhouses, he declared positively he would rather go into the house of correction. (Hear, hear.) It was said that they must have a workhouse test; they must make it less agreeable than the situation of a man out of doors. It was assumed that

all those who applied for admission into the workhouse were idle and disorderly. But it was well known that there were many men who laboured assiduously for thirty or forty years, toiling from morning till night, and never, until decrepitude arrived, made any application to the parish for relief. Besides these labourers, there were numerous little tradesmen, who never applied for assistance until it was impossible for them longer to exist without it. What he wanted the House to state distinctly was, whether it was the intention of a majority amongst them, that such a man as he had described should, after thirty years' assiduous but unsuccessful toil, be treated as a spendthrift and a squanderer? Yet, did they make the slightest distinction between the two cases? None. The noble lord,\* with his usual candour and boldness, had not hesitated to say, that 'no Board of Guardians shall dare to make any distinction between merit and demerit where destitution exists.' What a monstrous position was this to lay down, that there was to be no discrimination or difference, even if in one case distress was the produce of a long series of crime, in the other, of a long series of misfortune! (Hear, hear.) The noble lord had laid it down, that the treatment should be precisely alike in both cases. And this was what a reformed House of Commons (hear)—yes, a reformed, but not an amended, House of Commons—had done. He would prefer having the old boroughmongers back. (Laughter.) He declared solemnly, from what he had seen of their legislation, that he would prefer seeing the boroughmongers in the House to those whom he saw there now. (Cheers from the opposition benches.) He firmly believed it would have been better for the interests of the people. Would the boroughmongers have dared to introduce such a law? (Hear, hear.) But now, because that House was elected by considerable masses of the people, it was presumed that they were strong enough to work out the iniquity. The people were not represented there, and, if they were, such legislation would not be permitted to exist for an instant. An hon. member near him said, that 'it would be worse,' if the representation were more popular. If so, he would regret that there had been any such thing as reform, and should be sorry that he had ever taken a part in producing such a change. The people of England were not envious or malignant; on the

\* John Russell.

contrary, they were of a kindly and generous disposition. (Hear, hear.) All that they required was a kindly feeling. He did not believe that there existed on the face of the earth a more honest-hearted or a better people. (Hear.) Ought they to be treated in this way? Was it becoming in a body of gentlemen to sit there, under a pretext of legislating for the poor, and frame laws for their persecution and torture? But it was said, that the law would have the effect of raising wages. It had now been six years in existence, and the very reverse was proved to be the fact. How could it be otherwise? They said to the working people, 'We have secured our property by law; we have our mansions, our parks, our herds of deer, our hundreds of thousands a-year, and all the luxuries that wealth can purchase: we allow you to live outside of our park-palings; don't come over them,—if you do, you'll be a trespasser, and shall be punished. Don't pull down our paling; if you do, you'll be a thief.' Throughout the rural districts of England, there was a time when scarcely a cellar or a place about a farmhouse where he was born was secured. Thieves were not then thought of. Both farmers and gentlemen thought themselves surrounded by friends. How different was the state of things now! (Hear, hear.) They wanted a police to protect them; they required a new class of guardians around them. Having made laws for the security of their property, stringently providing against aggression, they further said to the people: 'Now you may get work if you can. If you do, you must take the wages that are offered you, or go into a gaol. You have only to choose between the proffered wages and a prison.' And this they called a contrivance for raising wages. It had the opposite effect; and it must be so, so long as this law continued. A man would prefer receiving five or six shillings a-week to going into a gaol. It was natural that men should dislike the restraint, the silence, the dietary, of a gaol. It was natural that they should dislike, that the governor should place them on bread and water for twenty-four hours, if he fancied them, in his whim, to be refractory. He (Mr. Wakley) received each day a multiplication of communications from all parts of England upon this subject, and here was one of them. A Dissenting minister in Oxfordshire wrote to him, that 'a man belonging to his congregation, of a sober, industrious, and religious character, had



applied for relief for himself, his wife, and five children. That man solemnly stated, that he would prefer 5s. a-week for the maintenance of all seven, rather than go into a Union workhouse.' (Hear, hear.) It would be absurd to say that this was a solitary case. In the discharge of his functions as Coroner, he had met several cases of persons who had absolutely perished rather than go into a workhouse. It was only a few days ago he had held an inquest in the Kensington Union on the body of a man who had died, with an order for his admission to the workhouse in his possession, dated three days before his death. He had been discovered in a room in a state of perfect exhaustion: never had he witnessed such a skeleton. The jury retired from the body with averted eyes, horrified at what they had seen, and exclaiming against the operation of the Poor-Law Act. It was stated at the inquest to be a frequent occurrence, that where a number of persons applied for relief on the Tuesday, some were obliged to remain from eleven in the morning till eleven at night before their cases were examined into. Sometimes the wretched paupers dropped in the passage in a state of exhaustion. Why had the Unions been made so enormously large, unless to prevent the people from obtaining relief? His belief was that they had been constructed on that principle. How was a poor man, a cripple, to go eight, nine, or ten miles to a workhouse, from which, if he only slightly miscalculated his time, he was sure to be shut out? And this was the system so actively abetted by the gentry of England—that proud and haughty aristocracy, boasting of the pure and generous blood which flowed in their veins! It was but the other day, that a Board of Guardians had applied to the Poor-Law Commissioners for four ounces of rice every day more than was allowed. These gentlemen were told, that their application could not be acceded to, and they were obliged to say to the people, 'We are sorry, but we (the great landed proprietors of the district) cannot give you the four ounces more of rice per day—the Commissioners will not let us.' (Hear.) The poor would ask, why did they submit? The gentry of England were not a timid race of men—they were not an ignorant race of men. The poor would say—'Suppose a law were passed to prevent the gentry from keeping more than a certain number of hounds, or racehorses, or to prevent them

from giving their dogs animal food more than once a-week. Then would each high-minded gentleman exclaim, 'What! a law framed to prevent us from feeding as many hounds as we please!' Then would the yeomanry cavalry be out in less than a week, and swords would glisten upon every hill, while the cry would be—'Shall we not be allowed to feed our hounds as we like?' But when there was question of the poor, then did these high-minded gentry bow down and truckle to every Government agent, and say, with due submission—'We regret exceedingly, that the Poor-Law Commissioners say the potatoes and bread you receive are amply sufficient for your sustenance; we cannot depart from their regulations.' Desiring the re-establishment of generous sympathies and kindly feelings, desiring that concord and goodwill shall reign around the land, in the room of the dangerous and growing spirit which was now springing up amongst us, and deploring the existence of this law, which had made tyrants of those who should be the legitimate protectors of the people, he submitted his motion to the House, in the hope that it might be carried. His object was to divide the subject into two Bills, one entirely appropriated to the Commissioners, the other so applied as to convince the people that it would work well without the Commissioners; and, if it were so framed, he believed that it would give satisfaction."—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*

"He thought the measure unjust, cruel, and unnatural."—*Hon. H. Fitzroy, House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*

"He should be sorry to say anything harsh towards the noble lord opposite;\* the county had a high respect for his private character; but he could not refrain from asking him how he could insult the people of England by offering them such a bill? The noble lord had spoken on former occasions on the necessity of conciliating the Irish people, in order that we might be strong in ourselves, and become a united people. He could assure the noble lord, that in the north of England nothing was so well calculated to separate and disunite the people from the Government as this bill, and he trusted he would not think of doing justice to Ireland alone, but that he would also do justice to the people of England. (Hear, hear.) He would address himself to the other side of the House, to those who consi-

\* Lord John Russell.

dered themselves as the friends of the poor, and called upon them to consider that this was the poor man's bill, and not to widen the interval between the rich and the poor, by supporting it. Before he sat down he would merely say, that nothing would more soothe the country, or be more satisfactory to the poorer classes, than the tearing this accursed bill from the statute-book; and although he did not expect he should be supported, still he must not forget that he had a duty to perform to his constituents, and to the other large counties in the country, and he would give an opportunity to hon. members to redeem their pledges to their constituents, by requesting, that the Speaker would put from the chair the resolution he held in his hand, 'That the bill be committed this day six months.'" —*Mr. T. Parker, House of Commons, March 19, 1841, on the Poor-Law Commissioners' Continuance Bill going into Committee.*

"General Johnson was opposed to the bill because, in his mind, it put the whole labouring class out of the law, and into the hands of the Poor-Law Commissioners. Petitions to a very great number had been presented to the House against the bill, and it was a remarkable circumstance, that there were only two petitions with two signatures in its favour. The present measure had a tendency to keep up dissensions in the country, and, if the legislature wished to excite the deadly hatred of the working classes, all they need to do was, to pass the bill under consideration. It was designated by the working classes throughout the country, as the rich man's law against the poor. (Hear, hear.) Out of every 100 of agricultural labourers or mechanics, 99 would be found, he undertook to say, to entertain the greatest abhorrence of the existing law. (Hear, hear.) Great stress had been laid on the bad administration of the old law; and it had been urged that nothing could be so injurious as paying wages partly out of the rates. He admitted this, but to what extent had such a system prevailed? It existed in not more than five counties; and in the north the paying of wages out of the rates was a thing unheard of. It was no reason, then, because the Poor-Law had been previously badly administered in five counties, that the old constitutional system should be totally subverted, and an innovation introduced throughout England. (Hear, hear.) Much was said about the

uniformity established under the New Law, but he denied that any uniformity existed; for in some Unions orders for out-door relief were issued, while in others the power to give such relief was withheld. The expenses for out-door relief, during the quarter ending Lady-day, 1840, was £818,632; and for in-door relief, £136,592; being a proportion of seven to one. He felt confident, that if Parliament persisted in imposing this law on the country, the results would be that society would be disorganized, and one class of the community would be set against the other. (Hear, hear.)"—*House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*

"Never did the aristocracy of this country lay the political axe with greater force at the root of their own tree than when they passed the New Poor-Law. It was an act that proved one of two things beyond all controvertibility,—either that, as a body, they have no rational claim to their own privileges and immunities, and that no portion of the community has any specific right to its distinct existence as a class; or that they are altogether so ignorant of the science of social polity, as to be totally unfit to hold their present legislative rank. The Constitution of England recognizes the right of the poor to an inheritance on the soil, as clearly as it does that of the manorial lords to their estates; but in passing and applying this law, constitutional authority has been set at nought; power and cunning have usurped all precedence of justice and rectitude; and an example has been set which will be available in future times, when the will of the strong shall stand, as it hath here done, in the stead of all precognizance, and when the people, being more mighty than the aristocracy, will argue that they have as true a right to appoint a commission for farming all the landed capital of the country for the purposes of the common wealth, as the aristocracy had to appoint a commission for abrogating the ancient claim of the poor to a legitimate and sufficient maintenance from that land. We have here alluded to the subject only in relation to those who have usurped this right; but what heart-rending volumes might be written in illustration of the effects upon their victims! Let us for a moment except altogether from consideration the incompatibility of such a measure with the genius of our institutions,—and upon what principles of humanity do we find it based?—to what end, morally viewed, do



applied for relief for himself, his wife, and five children. That man solemnly stated, that he would prefer 5s. a-week for the maintenance of all seven, rather than go into a Union workhouse.' (Hear, hear.) It would be absurd to say that this was a solitary case. In the discharge of his functions as Coroner, he had met several cases of persons who had absolutely perished rather than go into a workhouse. It was only a few days ago he had held an inquest in the Kensington Union on the body of a man who had died, with an order for his admission to the workhouse in his possession, dated three days before his death. He had been discovered in a room in a state of perfect exhaustion: never had he witnessed such a skeleton. The jury retired from the body with averted eyes, horrified at what they had seen, and exclaiming against the operation of the Poor-Law Act. It was stated at the inquest to be a frequent occurrence, that where a number of persons applied for relief on the Tuesday, some were obliged to remain from eleven in the morning till eleven at night before their cases were examined into. Sometimes the wretched paupers dropped in the passage in a state of exhaustion. Why had the Unions been made so enormously large, unless to prevent the people from obtaining relief? His belief was that they had been constructed on that principle. How was a poor man, a cripple, to go eight, nine, or ten miles to a workhouse, from which, if he only slightly miscalculated his time, he was sure to be shut out? And this was the system so actively abetted by the gentry of England—that proud and haughty aristocracy, boasting of the pure and generous blood which flowed in their veins! It was but the other day, that a Board of Guardians had applied to the Poor-Law Commissioners for four ounces of rice every day more than was allowed. These gentlemen were told, that their application could not be acceded to, and they were obliged to say to the people, 'We are sorry, but we (the great landed proprietors of the district) cannot give you the four ounces more of rice per day—the Commissioners will not let us.' (Hear.) The poor would ask, why did they submit? The gentry of England were not a timid race of men—they were not an ignorant race of men. The poor would say—'Suppose a law were passed to prevent the gentry from keeping more than a certain number of hounds, or racehorses, or to prevent them

from giving their dogs animal food more than once a-week. Then would each high-minded gentleman exclaim, 'What! a law framed to prevent us from feeding as many hounds as we please!' Then would the yeomanry cavalry be out in less than a week, and swords would glisten upon every hill, while the cry would be—'Shall we not be allowed to feed our hounds as we like?' But when there was question of the poor, then did these high-minded gentry bow down and truckle to every Government agent, and say, with due submission—'We regret exceedingly, that the Poor-Law Commissioners say the potatoes and bread you receive are amply sufficient for your sustenance; we cannot depart from their regulations.' Desiring the re-establishment of generous sympathies and kindly feelings, desiring that concord and goodwill shall reign around the land, in the room of the dangerous and growing spirit which was now springing up amongst us, and deploring the existence of this law, which had made tyrants of those who should be the legitimate protectors of the people, he submitted his motion to the House, in the hope that it might be carried. His object was to divide the subject into two Bills, one entirely appropriated to the Commissioners, the other so applied as to convince the people that it would work well without the Commissioners; and, if it were so framed, he believed that it would give satisfaction."—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*

"He thought the measure unjust, cruel, and unnatural."—*Hon. H. Fitzroy, House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*

"He should be sorry to say anything harsh towards the noble lord opposite;\* the county had a high respect for his private character; but he could not refrain from asking him how he could insult the people of England by offering them such a bill? The noble lord had spoken on former occasions on the necessity of conciliating the Irish people, in order that we might be strong in ourselves, and become a united people. He could assure the noble lord, that in the north of England nothing was so well calculated to separate and disunite the people from the Government as this bill, and he trusted he would not think of doing justice to Ireland alone, but that he would also do justice to the people of England. (Hear, hear.) He would address himself to the other side of the House, to those who consi-

\* Lord John Russell.

dered themselves as the friends of the poor, and called upon them to consider that this was the poor man's bill, and not to widen the interval between the rich and the poor, by supporting it. Before he sat down he would merely say, that nothing would more soothe the country, or be more satisfactory to the poorer classes, than the tearing this accursed bill from the statute-book; and although he did not expect he should be supported, still he must not forget that he had a duty to perform to his constituents, and to the other large counties in the country, and he would give an opportunity to hon. members to redeem their pledges to their constituents, by requesting, that the Speaker would put from the chair the resolution he held in his hand, 'That the bill be committed this day six months.'"  
 —*Mr. T. Parker, House of Commons, March 19, 1841, on the Poor-Law Commissioners' Continuance Bill going into Committee.*

"General Johnson was opposed to the bill because, in his mind, it put the whole labouring class out of the law, and into the hands of the Poor-Law Commissioners. Petitions to a very great number had been presented to the House against the bill, and it was a remarkable circumstance, that there were only two petitions with two signatures in its favour. The present measure had a tendency to keep up dissensions in the country, and, if the legislature wished to excite the deadly hatred of the working classes, all they need to do was, to pass the bill under consideration. It was designated by the working classes throughout the country, as the rich man's law against the poor. (Hear, hear.) Out of every 100 of agricultural labourers or mechanics, 99 would be found, he undertook to say, to entertain the greatest abhorrence of the existing law. (Hear, hear.) Great stress had been laid on the bad administration of the old law; and it had been urged that nothing could be so injurious as paying wages partly out of the rates. He admitted this, but to what extent had such a system prevailed? It existed in not more than five counties; and in the north the paying of wages out of the rates was a thing unheard of. It was no reason, then, because the Poor-Law had been previously badly administered in five counties, that the old constitutional system should be totally subverted, and an innovation introduced throughout England. (Hear, hear.) Much was said about the

uniformity established under the New Law, but he denied that any uniformity existed; for in some Unions orders for out-door relief were issued, while in others the power to give such relief was withheld. The expenses for out-door relief, during the quarter ending Lady-day, 1840, was £818,632; and for in-door relief, £136,592; being a proportion of seven to one. He felt confident, that if Parliament persisted in imposing this law on the country, the results would be that society would be disorganized, and one class of the community would be set against the other. (Hear, hear.)"—*House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*

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its operations tend? Grounded on the inhuman supposition, that it is possible, in a country where the chief of the landed capital of twenty millions of people is in the possession of about as many thousands, and where labour and bread are denied to a majority of the remainder by unnatural restrictions on trade—grounded, we say, upon the supposition, that it is possible, under such circumstances, to *punish* the poor into independence of those who by custom hold all real property in their own possession; its inevitable tendency is to confirm the clutch of poverty and barb its pangs, while it professes to annihilate pauperism, by substituting imprisonment for liberty, and starvation for relief.”—*Sheffield Iris*, March 23, 1841.

“Seeing, then, what had been the practice of the Commissioners—seeing the confusion to which the present system had given rise—that it had produced disorder in the place of uniformity, for what purpose were these Commissioners to be fastened on the country for five years longer? The people looked to that House, and not to the Poor-Law Commissioners. He besought them, then, not to leave this question to the triumvirate, but to undertake it themselves. How could they expect justice to be done if they shrank from their duty? They were not treating the question in a manly and consistent spirit. If they were really desirous of establishing a uniform law, let them set down that law in their own hands, let them set it down in the statute-book, where it might be understood and administered by the judges of the land. The present bill went on a mean, pettifogging system, unworthy for a great country to receive, and unbecoming a great assembly to impose. If they knew what should be done, why not make a law themselves in conformity with that knowledge? If they—658 men of all states and occupations—necessarily well acquainted with the people, did not possess sufficient information to enable them to come to a decision on this question, how could they expect the Commissioners to possess the knowledge of which they confessed themselves deficient? Under these circumstances it was their duty to make the duration of this Commission as short as possible, so as not to leave, in the undisturbed possession of power, an irresponsible body, whose previous conduct had given nothing but dissatisfaction to the country. (Cheers).”—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons*, March 22, 1841.

“Mr. Muntz would like to hear some reason adduced for continuing the power of the Commissioners for five years, for it had not yet been shown what benefit would be derived from the continuance either to the public or the Commission. The hon. member for London\* indeed said, that a shorter period would lead to discussion and unnecessary excitement, but, by urging the same argument, it might be proposed to grant the supplies for the five ensuing years, or pass the Mutiny Act for the same period. Until some reason was given, he did not know well how he should vote.”—*House of Commons*, March 22, 1841.

“He could not conceive a greater amount of moral guilt and obloquy, than the House incurred by passing the New Poor-Law Bill.”—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons*, March 22, 1841.

“The Act of Lord Althorp was an experiment so cruel and so unnecessary, in its harsher provisions, that nothing, but a belief in their extreme ignorance and stupidity, can palliate our sense of the wickedness of its original authors. The country has borne the experiment for nearly seven years; and its shocking consequences in many, very many instances, will not properly bear a recital. Let us dismiss them with the acknowledgment that they have, in a state of peace, too often realized the worst horrors of war, and gone far to prepare the people for a rebellion against order and property.”—*Standard*, April 5, 1841.

“In the course of his journal of his visit to Ireland in 1832, we meet with the following opinion on a subject, now much canvassed, namely, the introduction of Poor-Laws into Ireland:—‘The moral poor of Ireland are not vitiated by a poor-house education, but feel that spirit of independence which renders them superior to the servile spirit of those who are taught to live on begging, or on legal and systematic charity. This has been the case with England by the operation of the Poor-Laws. The noble and independent spirit of the yeomanry is degraded, and nearly extinct; and, when Ireland gets the Poor-Laws with which it is now threatened, the present rising sun of its prosperity will sink below the horizon, to rise no more for ever.’ The question is, could not a system of Poor-Laws be introduced, which should be free, and kept free, from those abuses which have made the English system a millstone round the

\* Mr. Grote.

nation's neck?"—*Stephens's "Life and Labours of Dr. Adam Clarke,"* (2nd edition).

"Great complaints had been made of the working of the New Poor-Law generally. By it it was endeavoured to produce a change in the habits, feelings, and manners, of a number of persons, just as if their individual sufferings and position were a matter unworthy of consideration. He thought it expedient and impracticable to make any system of philanthropy, however good it might be in itself, universal without considering the peculiar habits of the people residing in the different sections of the kingdom. A bill which might be good for the north might be injurious in the south. The evil which he and others had to complain of was the attempt made by the Commissioners to introduce the same law into every parish in the kingdom, without any reference to local circumstances, which might act in modifying the operation of that law. The principle which was recognizable in medicine was applicable to the Poor-Law Bill—that which was most nutritious was not always the best. It was necessary to consider the habits and constitutional peculiarities, and not make any sudden and violent changes without proper reflection."—*Sir F. Pollock, House of Commons, March 26, 1841.*

"One thing which he in particular objected to, was, the spirit that pervaded the whole of this law, in making pauperism a source of degradation to the poor. That might be the most efficacious means of diminishing pauperism, but it was a most unworthy mode of attaining that end. In the first place, paupers were no sooner admitted than they were clothed in the workhouse dress. Now, as a magistrate, he had had opportunities of knowing that persons confined in gaols felt no degradation more strongly than the badge of the prison dress. Was it right, then, that they should class those who had violated the laws of their country with those who had had the misfortune of being reduced to want and penury? But there was another regulation more degrading than that. It was, that the Relieving Officer and Overseer of every parish were bound to make out, and post on the church doors, a list of all the persons who, during the last three months, had received the most trifling relief from the parish."—*Mr. H. Hinde, Ibid.*

"It was said that the Board of Commissioners was necessary in order to shel-

ter the Boards of Guardians from obloquy in the exercise of their duty. To impute this degree of cowardice and want of good sense to the people of England, was a libel on their characters which they did not deserve. He did not think that the rich and poorer classes stood in such relation to each other, that they wanted a central and immediate authority to stand between them."—*Mr. Halford, Ibid.*

"He defied any one to prove that the labouring classes supported this bill. No petitions had been presented in its favour—certainly not from the labouring classes; whilst, on the other hand, petitions against it had been presented from all parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire, from Lancashire, with 50,000 signatures, from Sheffield, and all the great manufacturing districts. The hon. member for Sheffield (Mr. Ward) had boasted, that the bill had improved the condition of the industrious poor, and created good feeling among the lower classes. What evidence could he produce of such a state of things? Did he mean to say such was a faithful representation of the feelings and opinions entertained upon this subject at Sheffield? The next time the hon. gentleman presented himself among his constituents he would find out his mistake. He opposed all the main principles of this bill. It made poverty a crime; for no misconduct it incarcerated the labouring classes in dungeons, it tended to embitter their feelings, to break asunder the dearest ties, and would go far, he feared, to alienate the affections of the people from the laws, the Government, and the constitution of the country."—*The Hon. W. Duncombe, Ibid.*

"Indigence in a civilized country is the result of a failure to fulfil the conditions imposed upon social existence. Undoubtedly these conditions are more onerous in proportion to the advance of the state in civilization, but the means of fulfilling them are at least equally multiplied."—*Dr. W. Cooke Taylor's "Natural History of Society."*

"He had, from the introduction of the bill into the House in 1834 to the present time, maintained that there was no necessity for such an act, and that what was called the abusive administration of relief to the poor under the law as it then stood was not caused by the poor themselves, nor by any defect in the law, but was the effect of excessive taxation, of alterations from time to time in the currency, of corn-



laws to make food dear and to sustain rents, of laws to repeal the tax on property, and raise the revenue by taxes on every article that ought to be largely consumed by the poor, and, lastly, by the bill of 1819, which, by contracting the currency, doubled the pressure of taxation on the people, and withdrew from thousands the means which they would have otherwise had of employing the poor, and paying them wages adequate to their proper maintenance. There was not one of the causes to which he had referred, and which were all consequent on Acts of Parliament, that had not produced a necessity for the relief of the poor being administered, as to its amount, according to the wants of the poor in every one of the parishes to which they belonged. Where labour was scarce and wages low, the labourer had a right to more relief out of the provisions made for him by the Poor-Law, than where work could be had in plenty, and was properly paid for; and those resident among the poor were the best judges of the merits of every applicant. It was absurd to attempt, by a central Board sitting in London, to lay down any regulation that could operate justly towards either the poor or the ratepayer, or to carry into effect any uniform practice of administration by means of a self-acting test. The experiment had not succeeded, but the trial of it had been attended by harsh treatment and wanton neglect of the poor, such as was disgraceful to the age. Were the Act passed, and the despotic power conferred upon the Commissioners by it, intended to bring on us that disgrace? Unless the numerous harsh cases of treatment and neglect of the poor, which had been proved before committees of that and the other House of Parliament, and the statements made in debates on this Bill, and former discussions in that House—unless the Act were in effect repealed, or the truth of those cases and statements denied, his question must be answered in the affirmative. Every one who had any knowledge of the real state of the poor of this country, when the Act was passed, knew that such distressing consequences would result from the attempt to carry it into execution by the despotic power the Act created. Repeated predictions were made in that House, when the Bill was under discussion, that the poor would be subjected to severe privation, loss of life, and all the other distressing circumstances which were now matters of history, if an attempt were made

to carry out this inhuman and unjustifiable law; and repeated supplications were made to Lord Althorp, on that occasion, by many honourable members, that the House should pause on its proceedings on the measure; but these supplications were without effect.”—*Mr. Fielden, moving for the Repeal of the New Poor-Law, March 29, 1841.*

“It is not by the consolidation or concentration of powers, but by their distribution, that good government is effected. Were not this great country already divided into states, that division must be made, that each might do for itself what concerns itself directly, and what it can do so much better than a distant authority. Every state again is divided into counties, each to take care of what lies within its local bounds; each county, again into townships or wards, to manage minuter details; and every ward, into farms, to be governed each by its individual proprietor. Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon want bread.”—*Jefferson's Memoirs.*

“If my courage had every declined on the subject of the odious Poor-Law—if, with my impressions, and the view which I have taken of its effects upon human society in this country, I could ever have sunk into despair—the revived discussion of the subject in the House of Commons would have reanimated my sinking resolution, and induced me to make at least one effort more in behalf of my oppressed countrymen. With how much more spirit do I come into the field again, when I never did doubt but that the operation of the law itself would fulfil my gloomiest predictions; and be, in fact, my best ally in shaking off the yoke which a malignant Whig ministry, and a misled Tory opposition, have combined to fix upon the necks of those whom it was their duty to cherish—the manufacturing artisans of the towns and villages, and the rural population of the country? My hopes are now, therefore, revived. *My* hopes did I say? No, those of millions of my brother Englishmen—those of millions who know how to estimate the national character, and are determined that starvation, ‘bonds, and imprisonment,’ exclusion from the sight of the fair face of nature, and separation from those they hold most dear, shall not be the lot of men who are guilty of no other offence, than having sunk in their endeavours to

save themselves and their families—in fact, guilty of no other crime but that of poverty.

“What now are the feelings of those who baffled me by every disingenuous art when I was in Parliament, cried me down with almost deafening clamours, garbled the evidence given to the Committee, of which I was an oppressed member? Do they not, whatever they may avow, feel in their hearts ashamed of their conduct? Have they not, though too late, learnt one grand lesson—that honesty is the best policy; and that all their efforts to govern this country by a contrary course, are, after years of treachery, falsehood, and cruelty, still in a state of suspension? They have *not* carried their New Poor-Law, of which they boasted as a panacea—they have *not* carried their New Poor-Law, notwithstanding the manner in which they vilified all its opposers...they have *not* carried it; and I verily believe they are now more remote from their object than ever. In fact, the language which they now hold is not the language of advance, but of retreat: they are looking behind them for the means of escape. ‘What can we do with the large Union workhouses?’ they now ask. ‘How can we get back again to the original law?’ That may be matter of consideration to them; but to the nation at large, who think with me, and like me—to the mass of the British people—it is no consideration at all. ‘Rescue us from these places of torment (say they), and put them to whatever uses you please afterwards.’

“I have said above, that the authors of this law heaped all kinds of falsehood upon the heads of those who opposed it. This is the language which Lord John Russell used respecting me at the close of the election for Stroud:—‘His first inquiry in the new Parliament (he said) would be to know how those principles which had been applied to agricultural, could be applied to manufacturing districts. Indeed, he would have suggested three months ago, that the Committee should direct its inquiry to that object, but for the mass of rigmorole evidence which Mr. Walter, the late member for Berkshire, had obtruded on the Committee. However, that was now at an end. The constituents of that hon. member were so dissatisfied by his conduct with respect to this Bill, that they would not return him again. The Com-

mittee would, therefore, go on with its inquiry with less difficulty.’

“It was in July, 1837, that his lordship used these words, and then he was at the point of beginning a new stage in his sham inquiry, unencumbered by me. He and his friends, ay, and his enemies too in political matters, have been inquiring ever since, and their inquiries ‘have found no end.’ It is now the spring of 1841. Have they gone on without difficulty? I ask them, Are they not now more embarrassed than ever?

“My constituents (he says) were so dissatisfied by my conduct with respect to the Poor-Law Bill, that they would not return me again. The fact is, that he knew as little of the county of Berks at that time, as he and those who joined him in that county on the subject of this noxious Bill, know of the feelings of Englishmen in general. My motive for retiring then was chiefly because I did not receive that support which I ought to have done in my opposition to this measure. With me it was vital; if I failed of overthrowing it, I cared nothing for being in Parliament. Those of the county who fled to the Whigs upon this odious measure might have been opposed to my return. Upon this point, however, I desist from saying more, though much more might be said, as it relates to myself personally. Personally, I trust, I have said enough to wipe off the aspersion which Lord John endeavoured to cast upon me and the county generally; and I do not believe at this moment, that there is any man in the county, or the Ministry, or the section of the Tory party who joined the Whig ministry upon this question, who does not wish that the New Poor-Law Bill had never been thought of or attempted.

“I have, on former occasions, explained why such a measure as that which has been forced upon the country was not necessary; and what mischiefs have sprung from it! The rural police, the English gendarmerie it may be called, was one of its deformed and unnatural offspring. Its expenses, where it has been inflicted, are enormous; and if it be necessary, it has only been made so, with its attendant charges, by the New Poor-Law. Then Chartism, yes, Chartism, we owe to the odious measure of oppressing the poor. Lord John Russell himself broadly states it. He says, that Chartism sprang out of the ‘agitation got up (that



is his word) against the Poor-Law Amendment-Act.' Are these no evils to spring from one single public act? Even if the Poor-Law itself had not been reprehensible and cruel, its consequences and concomitants were sufficient of themselves to have rendered it objectionable. With respect to the first of these evils, the rural police, I believe that few of those who originally supported it have not the same feeling as those who first supported the Poor-Law itself—they wish they had never known anything of it. For its inutility in some cases I myself can answer. At the close of last summer some gentlemen, who are friends of the Poor-Law, asserted, that the rural police was indispensable in two parishes in which I have property, and strenuously contended for the establishment of a mounted and dismounted police. I myself argued against the project, for which, as the event has shown, there did not exist the slightest necessity. The police gentlemen were so strenuous for its introduction, that they took the necessary steps to cause its being carried into effect; when, unluckily for them, it was discovered that a deposition must be made of misdemeanours committed or apprehended. This turned out to be impracticable, as no one could be found to make such deposition. However, rural police or no rural police (for in some places it is inflicted), were ever spring assizes known to be burdened with such lists of criminals as those which have been lately held? And to what cause is that to be attributed, but to severe suffering, occasioned conjointly, no-doubt, by the length of the winter, and the determination of a degraded population to starve, or commit crime, as their morals might be more or less firm, rather than enter the odious Union workhouses?" — *Mr. Walter's "Opinions expressed by him since he was in Parliament,"* March, 1841.

"If self-preservation be the first law of our nature, would not every one in a state of nature be morally justified in taking to himself that which is indispensable to such preservation, where, by so doing, he would not rob another of that, which might be equally indispensable to his preservation? And if the value of life be regarded in a right point of view, may it not be questioned whether his right of preserving life, at any expense short of endangering the life of another,

does not survive man's entering into the social state, whether his right can be surrendered or forfeited, except when it opposes the Divine law, upon any supposition of a social compact, or of any convention for the protection of the mere rights of property."—*Wordsworth*.

"The New Poor-Law is only *one* branch of the Factory system, intended to drive the agricultural poor into the factories." — *Oastler's "Fleet Papers."* April 3, 1841.

"The glory was gone—the glory of God, of humanity, of benevolence, of Christian principle and practice—the glory was gone, and mammon sat in Jehovah's throne, and Belial was exalted over the cross of a bleeding and dying Redeemer. (Hear, hear.) How long this was to last God only knew. This law, however, must be repealed (cheers) or England would go down to rise no more for ever. (Cheers.) It must be repealed, or we shall be disinherited of our very humanity, and become worse than the beasts that perish. When he himself contemplated how it was possible for a law of this kind to become enacted, he could not forget that this law was concocted by a Liberal Administration (hear, hear, hear), and he had no doubt that this law had been many years in a state of projection, and the very men who enacted it—the Broughams, Russells, Peels, Melbournes, Spencers, and O'Connells, and the whole of the leaders of the great political factions of the country, had long had their eye on the principle of this measure, and that the most able, cunning, and crafty lawyers of the land had been employed to lay their heads together to devise an Act of Parliament, out of which there could be no outlet; and they had devised an Act out of which it was impossible for the country to escape, unless by a plan which he should recommend before he concluded the remarks he was about to make. (Loud cheers.) He then adverted to the state of the country at the time this Bill passed, and the great confidence which the people had in the Government, in consequence of the promises that had been made of continued reform. Their whole cry was 'give us time, and you shall see what we will do.' And they did see what they did, they gave the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. He spoke of the deception used in the word 'amendment,' and remarked, that when the people found that the Poor-Laws

were to be amended, they naturally expected the condition of the poor would be improved. As soon, however, as the country found that a Relieving Officer meant not a man to relieve distress, to succour the afflicted, to give food to the hungry, medicine to the sick, and the blessings of religion to the dying, but meant a man to relieve the landlords from the necessity of the payment of all rates, and to remove from the poor man's cottage the last chair, and the few handful of flocks on which he and his wife and children slept—when the country found that a Relieving Officer meant a man to remove the last relict of household furniture from the cottage of the miserable, when it found the Bastiles rising, and the whole of the Devil's scheme carried into full and awful execution,—then the country began to work—then it began to arise and shake itself, and cry out 'Repeal, repeal, repeal—not amend—repeal, repeal the New Poor-Law.'—*Rev. J. R. Stephens's Speech, reported in the "Northern Star," Aug. 4, 1838.*

"From its very birth we detected that the principles of Lord Althorp's Act, the 'boon to the female population of England,' were cruel and unchristian; but, with many others, we determined to see how it worked, (an odious phrase, but so current in these days, that we use it,) hoping, as in the cases of many other severe statutes, that man would interpose between the rigour of the written law, and its actual execution and enforcement. We said within ourselves, 'Such and such powers are created and conferred upon certain functionaries by the law, but will be resorted to only in cases of extremity—of emergency.' To the disappointment of our reasonable hopes, the incessant labours of the Commissioners in London, and their itinerant satellites, have been directed to prevent any interposition between the letter of the law, and its exact execution."—*Frazer's Magazine*, April, 1841.

"Some recent votes in Parliament make us fear that it will come to this—a necessity may arise for the nation out of doors to compel their representatives, or rather, we should write members of Parliament, for Christian England is not represented in this matter, 'to consider the cause of the poor.' Deeply do we deplore the probable occurrence of such a necessity, for evil comes of agitation, even to promote a good cause; and, therefore, we earnestly implore the members of the legislature who profess to believe their

Bibles, the truth of which are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and which do not fluctuate with man's versatile and shifting opinions, nor are dependent on time or locality, but are as applicable in the England of to-day as in Palestine of yore, and shall not be violated with impunity to the end of time, to turn to their Bibles, and see whether every other maxim of the promoters of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act is not contradictory to the written word of God, and nearly all the rules and regulations of the Commissioners—certainly all those which we object to—in daring defiance of the reiterated threats denounced in Scripture against those who mock and oppress the poor. Every argument urged by the economists and calculators in favour of their system is answerable from the pages of that volume which they now profanely deride as obsolete, but from which they shall hereafter be judged. Fully are we sensible of the sneers that await us from such beings as Mr. Edwin Chadwick, the viceroy over the three kings at Somerset-house; and Lord John Russell, who laughed outright the other evening at good Sir Robert Inglis, for alluding to the Divine prophecies in Parliament; quite prepared are we for all the rebuke and blasphemy that may assail us when, taking our stand on the revealed verities of God's word, we pronounce the Poor-Law Amendment-Act impolitic, unjust, oppressive, and unchristian."—*Frazer's Magazine*, April, 1841.

"The workhouse is a *bad test*. And this is not disproved by the fact, that it has been the instrument of reducing the rates. If flogging to 100 lashes had been made the condition of relief, it would have had a similar effect. It is true that, with the derisory Amendment-Act in their hands, the Commissioners did not say, 'Prove the reality of your destitution by submitting to the test of physical torture.' Their words and intelligible acts ran, 'Prove the reality of your destitution by abandoning your home and your friends in poverty—sell all the little furniture which you have acquired with so much difficulty—quit the side of your partner in toil—consent to give up your children—see your whole family exposed to the pestilential diseases of a workhouse—submit to imprisonment, and associate with vagabonds in wards, and sleep with them in beds—or we cannot admit your claim to relief in the vicissitudes of winter, or the fluctuations of trade.' Now, this '*test*'



is in every respect bad ; it is worse than the direct infliction of pain, because persons are reduced to destitution from various causes ; and a vagabond, a sturdy rogue, a heartless villain, could enter the work-house without any loss, and would be too ready to part from those who had any claim on his affections and industry ; while the sacrifice to the unfortunate hard-working labourer would be inconceivable, tearing up all his best feelings by the roots, and drying up every source of enjoyment left to him by the curse of Adam—liberty, self-respect, and family affections.”—*The Lancet*, April 3, 1841.

“Our foremost complaint against the present Poor-Law, as directed to be administered, is, that the rules and regulations of the Commissioners, which we presume it will be before long declared the ‘*crimen læsæ majestatis*,’ high treason, to disobey, do not recognize men and women as human, rational, and immortal beings, but as animals to be lodged and fed. The possibility of involuntary misfortune is never admitted, nor any distinction made between the honest, industrious, virtuous couple, whom events over which neither husband nor wife could have any control, have reduced to destitution, and the idle, the drunken, the dissolute, or the dishonest. The Commissioners have officially announced, that none are legally entitled to relief, nor to be considered destitute, unless they are in danger of perishing for want. Therefore, if a workman, by the failure of his master, or any other cause for which he is not responsible, nor could have prevented, is thrown suddenly out of work, he must not be relieved during his temporary suspension of employment, if he has a box of tools which he may turn into money to buy food. So long as the ‘varnished clock clicks behind the door,’—so long as any stick of furniture, ay, or a Bible, handed down from sire to son for a century, remains to be pawned or sold,—the honest family involved in distress by a father’s, or a husband’s sickness, are not legally entitled to relief—they are in no danger of perishing for want. The rich and lofty ones of the earth know not how all but impossible it is for a poor man to furnish his humble home a second time, nor understand how its smoky rafters can be dear to him, and with what a bleeding heart a mother’s elbow chair, all rickety though it be, is sent to the brokers to buy bread.”—*Frazer’s Magazine*, April, 1841.

“Will you hear one word about the

New Poor-Law, Sir, from me? You have heard many in former years. I would save you from destruction if I could. Listen to me this once—the *New Poor-Law is a failure—the bubble has burst!* How do I prove it? Not by disgusting you with the recital of those accumulating instances of death, in every shape, which that forerunner of want engenders, and which has made England one great charnel-house for the poor! It is true, Sir, that while we boast that we have been spared from the ravages and rampings of the foreign war-horse, we are cursed with a law more direful and deadly in its operation, than contending armies are in the battle-field. For the present, however, I waive all those heart-rending facts (I shall, in my forthcoming numbers, not fear to grapple with the monster, and trace his blood-marks inch by inch). Now, it is enough that I demonstrate that *the New Poor-Law is a failure*. Lord Brougham said, if that law were passed, ‘It would effect a great and a most desirable improvement in the morals and the happiness of the poor. That it would restore to industry its proper reward—reinstatement property in security, and lift up once more—God be praised!—the character of that noble English peasantry to the proud eminence, where, but for the old Poor-Laws, it would still have shone untarnished—the admiration of mankind, and the glory of the country which boasts it as its brightest ornament!’

“Such were the promises of Lord Brougham to their lordships when he proposed that fatal measure, July 21, 1834. Now, Sir, what is the result? Read over once more the noble dreamer’s anticipations—the wise philosopher’s deductions—and then turn to the avowed organ of her Majesty’s Government, the *Globe* newspaper, in the seventh year of trial of that very measure, and solemnly peruse these awful words ; you cannot read them too often, Sir :—‘*The working classes are now, in fact, at war with all the superior classes. They are alienated and hostile, heart and soul.*’ Remember also the fact, that, in consequence of this alarming state of things, a rural police (which Lord John Russell has himself declared would destroy the freedom of England) is now demanded, in aid of the tyrannical and unconstitutional power of the Poor-Law Commissioners! and then, Sir, turn to that file of letters, which, when I was your steward some years ago, I wrote to you, endeavouring to convince you, that

such would be the awful and ruinous results of the operation of that accursed Act, and say, 'Have Lord Brougham's or Richard Oastler's opinions been stamped by time, experience, and fact, with truth?' Sir, *it is a failure*—and if there be either honesty or truth in its proposers and promoters, they will seize the very first opportunity to tear that 'atrocious and execrable Act' (these are the venerable Eldon's words respecting it) from the statute-book. But if not—if they resolve to ruin themselves rather than acknowledge their error and retrace their steps, I need not now inform you of the further consequences; you will find them fully explained in those letters to which I have referred you. If stupidity resolves to maintain that law, those consequences are inevitable, in spite of Commissioners and police!—*Oastler's "Fleet Papers."*

"What doits are we of these enlightened days! In 1533 an Act was passed regulating the price of 'beef, pork, mutton, and veal'—and why? Because the poor were *then* fed on those substantial viands; and the legislature required that they should have enough;—'these (beef, pork, mutton, and veal,) being the food of the poorer sort,' says that Act. But why should we Christians be reduced to the necessity of quoting Acts of Parliament, or the opinions of magistrates and statesmen? Hath not Eternal Wisdom spoken, and declared, that '*the husbandman that laboureth MUST BE FIRST PARTAKER OF THE FRUITS*?' He has, Sir! Yet the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, not only denies the husbandman that RIGHT; but it also invents, under the influence of Satan, 'a scheme,' a 'test,' as it is called, to reduce him 'to live on a coarser sort of food,' by forcing the labourer to measure his wages, not by the comforts and necessities which are his RIGHT, but by his natural dread and detestation of imprisonment, separation, and workhouse diet! So that, instead of 'beef, pork, mutton, and veal,' which was the fare of his ancestor—he is reduced, under the accursed 'test,' to potatoes and a little coarse bread—with, now and then, a red herring. My blood chills while I write. I wonder that English aristocrats can be so cruel! I still more wonder, that English labourers can be so submissive and so servile!

"Well then, Sir, such being my opinions, I reject the leadership and the companionship of any man who has sanctioned that most accursed Act. The

jargon which we hear 'about the impossibility of making laws to protect labour, and to ensure to the industrious labourer a comfortable competence,' might be worth an answer, in a country where laws could not be made to secure wealth; but in *this* country, where individuals are *protected* in the enjoyment of thousands and hundreds of thousands of pounds a-year, it is surely not too much to expect, that the industrious labourer should be guaranteed and protected in the enjoyment of competence and plenty! If this cannot be done, the end of Government is not attained, and the bond of society and civilization is broken. In my opinion, men who indulge in such wild theories, are fit only for Bedlam, or the enlightened modern school of liberal philosophy. At all events, they are not required, because they cannot be useful, in the constitutional, Christian, civilized legislature of England. We hear much about 'Bible education' for the people—would to God that our law makers were educated therein! They would then know that God requires mercy and justice towards the helpless, imbecile, and impotent, who are His poor; and that He insures plenty as the reward of industry.

"The power given to the Poor-Law Commissioners over the rates and the poor of England, is a power which the Constitution rejects, and which in my opinion cannot long exist with the institution of Crown, Lords, and Commons. The centralizing system is at open war with the self-governing constitutional system; one or other must, I think, soon give way. Nothing ever surprised me more, than the ready acquiescence of the magistracy in the enforcement of the New Poor-Law. It levels its power, not more against the poor and the rate-payers, than it does against 'their own order.' But, to conclude: I consider any statesman who supports the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act, as totally unfit to lead any party of Christians or constitutionalists. I care not what their rank, talents, influence or wealth, may be—they are philosophers—not Christians!—they are levellers, not Conservators! They may call themselves by what name they please, to gull their followers—they have rendered themselves incapable of guiding the vessel of state in a Christian land."—*Oastler's Retiring Address to his Friends at Huddersfield, October, 1840.*



“——— The sweet words  
Of Christian promise, words that even yet  
Might stem destruction.”—COLERIDGE’S *SIBYLLINE LEAVES*.

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“Mr. Thornhill, it is high time that you landlords should awake out of sleep. Nothing is more sure than, that the millions of pounds which the landlords fancy they have gained by the horrible operation of the New Poor-Law will, if restitution to the poor and rightful owners be not made, act as a millstone to their whole ‘order,’ and destroy that which it was intended to preserve. You know, Sir, that upon this question I admit of no compromise. You know that I have aforetime warned you, and you have turned a deaf ear; I can now appeal to facts and admissions; with the authority of those facts and those admissions I am now emboldened—even at this, the eleventh hour—to conjure you, and through you the whole of your ‘order,’ as you value your property and the peace of society, to sever yourselves from those men, and those delusions which have now (even on their own showing) disappointed your hopes, and falsified all their predictions. Haply it may not be too late, certainly there is no time to spare. Do not despise this appeal; it proceeds not from your enemy, your prisoner has no evil in his heart towards you. No, Sir, he will rejoice if his incarceration shall be one means of restoring you and ‘your order’ to the heart-place of the people. By the New Poor-Law the landlords have, under the pretence of charity, robbed the poor; with the promise of protecting industry, they have stolen its reward; pretending to improve the morality of the poor, they have forced modesty to blush and weep because of their horribly-indecent ‘rites;’ in the name of philanthropy, they have murdered the sons and daughters of adversity! This they have done—if in ignorance, facts cannot now fail to instruct them; if, being convinced, they still resolve to continue in their sinful course, as sure as God is truth they will very soon have cause to repent.” — *Oastler’s “Fleet Papers,”*

“How anomalous, that while our legislators provide with the nicest care for the prevention of cruelty to brutes, they are planning one of the most brutal enactments ever heard of, that for rendering poor idiots still more idiotic and miserable,

by depriving them of the little sun-light of liberty they can enjoy, by wresting them from the society of kind, intelligent friends and neighbours, and huddling them together in moping crowds, in places remote from all those who can take a natural interest in their comfort! There is something horrible in the mere contemplation of such a project. Two-thirds, at least, of those who come under the denomination of idiots, are people more susceptible of happy impressions from acts of kindness—more alive to any pleasurable ministration to the animal senses—than the intelligent and educated can possibly be: nor is this at all wonderful to those who have given the subject a tithe of the attention it merits. Domestic attachment, gratitude, and all the *instinctive* faculties, are generally excessively strong in those whose lot is cast in this unfortunate class; and being the only medium through which they can receive any personal gratification, we cannot think of anything more cruel, than this intention of the legislature to *hive* the unhappy beings in places where their better feelings can never, or rarely, be called into action, and where the most painful and disgusting degradation of the human form will be the inevitable consequence. But why proceed? The measure entails a multiplicity of evils—all subversive of whatever is noble or kindly amongst those whom nature may not have fitted to struggle into a mastery over the rest of their species. Yet, after all, viewed with an eye to pecuniary interest, what have THE PEOPLE gained by the change from the old system? What, under the new system, will they ever gain in one way that will not be lost in another? From numberless illustrations of its absolutely ruinous effects—say nothing of its total inapplicability—in some localities, just let us select one:—During the last year, the overseers of a populous parish in the Mansfield Union were summoned before the magistrates, because that parish *could not* meet the demands of the Union upon it, and so impracticable is the New Law there, that though upwards of £200 was dispensed in the way of public charity, after *ten*

rates had been allowed—some of the *rate-payers*, we are informed, were the *whole ten* in arrears; while others had positively to pledge the clothes off their backs to meet parochial demands! Yet so sensible from the first were the inhabitants of that place of the misapplication of the law to their own condition that, with only one or two exceptions, petitions condemning it were signed, in 1836, by every qualified resident. For Englishmen, after that, to thrust so intolerable a burden upon such a parish, were almost enough to make the poor people view the possibility of a foreign invasion with delight.” —*Sheffield Iris*, March 23, 1841.

“There is another subject upon which, in the course of a conversation which I had with some members of your constituency last summer, I was less explicit than I might have been. Allow me now to dwell upon it more fully. I was asked whether I was an enemy to the corn-laws. I said that I was an enemy to violent or vindictive proceedings against any party or body of men. Gentlemen, it may not be evident to you at first sight how closely this question is connected with that of the New Poor-Law. This last detested enactment found its chief support in a body of landed proprietors, whose estates were encumbered with settlements, mortgages, and other debts, and who consequently endeavoured to protect what remained to them free from incumbrance, from bearing its proportion in contributing to the necessities of their poorer brethren. I do not say that those contributions were not very heavy—I know they were, and they ought to have been diminished, as they were in many parishes, by the exertions of the local authorities acting under the old humane law. But that which I have stated above, I assert to have been the origin or operative cause of the New Poor-Law. Now, gentlemen, if we could procure the repeal of that inhuman law, or the reduction of its enactments to a bearable state, I should then say, that it would be hard upon the landed proprietary of the country to press for a total repeal of the corn-laws also. It would be treating them harshly; it would, to use a homely proverb, be ‘burning their candle at both ends.’ For still, gentlemen, the landed interest is an important one in the country—upon their ease and sufficiency depends the employment of the agricultural labourers, that class from whence other classes spring, and by which they

are invigorated. But to suppose that the landed interest is, on the one hand, to get rid of the proper and Christianly maintenance of the poor, by building work-houses calculated, as one of the Poor-Law Commissioners himself stated, to inspire ‘the dread of torments’—to suppose that the landed interest are to do this on the one hand, and, on the other, to stop the approach to this country, or sale in British markets, of all corn but their own, by means of high and prohibitory duties—to suppose that the landed interest, I say, are to do both these things, is to suppose a double act of injustice and inhumanity. If, then, we must have the poor treated as they are by the present law, at least let the rest of society have a free access to corn and bread, that those who are able to work may also be enabled to live, and to keep themselves and their feebler relatives from those ‘places of torment!’ And you will be pleased to observe, gentlemen, that when I do thus talk, it is not on a subject in which I have no interest. I have a considerable one, and am speaking against that interest; for I also am a landed proprietor, and shall feel as much as many the low price of grain.

“I have so often spoken on the subject of the New Poor-Law, that I shall now add little more, except that if there is any one question upon which my conduct has already spoken, and which you have rewarded with your approbation, this is that question. On the scheme of parting man from wife, and children from their parents, in these Cyclopean dens, the Union workhouses, with which the Whigs are smothering the land, it is difficult to say anything new, and for this reason—that when you assert that fire burns, water drowns—that pain is distressing, torment intolerable—what can you say more? In the same way, when you have asserted, that the separation in question, those of parents and children, and of man and wife, violate the laws of God and nature, you can add nothing more to describe the greatest conceivable atrocities. I will not here press the constitutional part of the question. Connected with this subject is the new Rural Police-bill. This, as you are aware, is a necessary appendant of the New Poor-Law Bill; it is meant to constrain obedience to the severity of the novel method of treating the poor. But if I were not thoroughly convinced of this, as I am, and as reason shows to be the fact, I should still object to both, as novelties in our history—as experiments



of which, under a happier state of things, and a more constitutional administration of the laws, we should have no need. Here we have one tyrannical measure producing another. It has been peculiarly gratifying to me to find that, in a town constituency like yours, I had made friends by my conduct upon a question that might appear exclusively rural. Some of the electors of the borough of Southwark, having also the franchise of the county of Berks, have promised me their whole support in the former, as they had done in the latter, on account of the opposition which I had in some instances successfully raised to mischievous Enclosure Bills. It was from Enclosure Bills that poverty first began to press with a heavy hand upon the poor, as, if necessary, I could prove to you from portions of our history. Be assured, that whatever can be found to affect injuriously the interests of the industrious classes of society, whether agricultural or manufacturing, shall have my most determined and active resistance." — *Mr. Walter's Address, Southwark Election, Dec., 1839.*

"The April number of *Frazer's Magazine* has a very able article, recommending a summary and complete repeal of the New Poor-Law. If we consulted popularity alone, or if we followed the bent of our own inclination, without looking to consequences, we should undoubtedly concur in this proposition. We must, however, look further than popularity—must take some other guide than present impulse, if we are honestly to discharge our duty; and therefore, in the case before us, we will, for the few minutes that we can devote to the subject, employ the same practice of cool and minute inquiry, which a humorous and very clever writer in the same number of the Magazine has parodied in a manner probably more faithful than complimentary.

"Let us suppose, then, the new law summarily and totally repealed, in what condition would the parishes, and more particularly the poor, be placed? We confess our inability to describe, or even adequately to imagine, the chaos of confusion between old regulations and new; old claims to parochial property and new claims; rights of settlement under the old law and under the new; and in all this whirlpool of disorder the poor would be sure to be the principal sufferers—the lawyers the only gainers. We may the more easily pass over this view of the

matter, because it must appear manifest to every one who for a moment reflects upon these consequences of a simple repeal, that the thing is an impossibility. Another view of the question will, we think, reconcile most thinking men, however they may feel towards the law (and none can dislike it more than we do in its present shape), to this conviction—that a simple repeal is impossible. The act of Lord Althorp was an experiment—an experiment so cruel and so unnecessary in its harsher provisions, that nothing but a belief in their extreme ignorance and stupidity can palliate our sense of the wickedness of its original authors. The country has borne the experiment for nearly seven years; and its shocking consequences in many, very many instances, will not properly bear a recital. Let us dismiss them with the acknowledgment, that they have in a state of peace too often realized the worst horrors of war, and gone far to prepare the people for a rebellion against order and property. If we had not good assurances, that the worst of these consequences of the new law are about to cease very promptly, we should go the whole length with the writer in *Frazer*; but we think that most of the worst consequences of the law have ceased through the vigilant humanity of the opponents of it; and among these, ever honoured be the name of Mr. Walter, whose conduct in this particular has justly raised him to a place among the best benefactors of his country and of mankind. Other bad consequences of the law are, we think, about to follow the fate of those that have been already removed; and in truth we hold to our first opinion, that, bad as any law may come from the hands of its authors, the people of England will, sooner or later, mould it into a shape of humanity and religion. This is no excuse for introducing a bad law. The doctrine that the happiness of the people of one age, or of half-an-age, or indeed of a year, may be sacrificed with a view to the benefit of a succeeding class, is a doctrine suited only to Jacobins, as Robespierre and Marat were its first teachers. But, though no apology is sufficient for the introduction of such a law as Lord Althorp's, it may be a grave question whether we are to throw away all its good, little as that all may be, after all its evil, or nearly all, has been exhausted.

"Whoever has paid attention to the late proceedings of the House of Commons must see, that it is now for the first

time that that assembly is approaching to a condition of intelligence to legislate for the poor. The New Law has furnished that instruction which an experiment always furnishes, and the instruction has been forced upon the House, however reluctant, by the benevolent importunity of the public. Already the harsher provisions of the law are either explained away or formally condemned; and the process of amelioration in this respect must proceed, if the country persevere in its humane exertions, of which we have no doubt. Already the Commissioners have had some sharp rebukes to humble their arrogance and mitigate their tyranny. Already their hours are counted, and they have been apprised, that even the respite with which they are indulged is to be dependent upon a considerable amendment in their conduct. With the termination of the commission, however, will expire that principle of centralization, of which the writer in *Frazer* justly complains; and, the principle of central control once extinguished, it demands little foresight to anticipate with perfect certainty, that the management of the poor will return to its old kindly channel. The Unions will be dissolved in every case in which they shall not be found beneficial to the poor—the vile clauses, exposing weak young women to the arts of seducers, encouraged by a legal irresponsibility, will be repealed. We have already said, that the cruelties of detail will cease when we have said that the management of the poor will return to the old channel. What, then, of the law may be expected to remain?—the provisions against expensive litigation—the provisions against paying wages from the poor-rates, and, as a consequence of this, a more equitable scale of rating—a beneficial remnant beyond question. The experiment has been tried, let us take from it all the profit it affords; we have just mentioned a part of this profit, but a far greater good remains—the moral lesson.

“The old Poor-Laws were unpopular with many besides the prating coxcombs who made a character by railing at them in speeches, pamphlets, and reviews. The New Poor-Law has demonstrated that this unpopularity was unjust; that if the old law was not faultless, it stood in the way of another law, which has been little better than a mass of blunders and cruelties.”—*Standard*, April, 1841.

“It is apparent that bodily strength is the only patrimony the labourer enjoys;

this is to supply him *and his family* with the necessities of life: the same patrimony, in conjunction with the opportunity of exerting the faculties of the mind, the inhabitant of an uncivilized country possesses; the *first* is restrained by the laws from trespassing on *appropriated* property, and in this country all that can be called property is *appropriated*; the *other* has ample scope for the exercise of his faculties, both of body and mind, the gifts of nature lying open to the first man who has strength or dexterity sufficient to occupy them: here is a manifest advantage which the savage possesses, and which the laws of his country have taken from the English labourer.

“In this island a disposition to relish the comforts of life, the meanest of us equally possesses with the greatest; surely, therefore, those comforts correspondent with our station, should not be removed at such a distance from the grasp of any of us, *as to be attainable only by a breach of the laws of society.*

“While a tenth part of our countrymen enjoy the comforts, or revel in the luxuries of life, the patient and industrious multitude are sinking beneath a load of poverty and wretchedness.

“The claims of the poor on society are, a fair retribution for their strength and ability to labour; *their claims are as serious RIGHTS, and they demand from the State full as serious a consideration as any other claim upon it, for security of political liberty or private property*; the RIGHT to receive a compensation for their labour, adequate to their necessary wants, while they have a capability of labour, is certainly due to them; and the RIGHT of maintenance, when that capability to labour is passed, is another DEBT which society owes them.

“The labourer is worthy of his *hire*, because he gives for it his sole property, his strength and his time, reserving to himself only sufficient intervals for refreshment and repose; what ought therefore to be his *hire*? The answer is obvious; the necessities and comforts of life, equal to the reasonable wants of that class of society among which he ranks; in this country clothing, fire, and dwelling, with the supply of such meat and drink, as shall enable him, day after day, and year after year, to pass through a life of hard labour and constant fatigue. There is a tacit contract between men, when societies, states, and kingdoms, are in their infancy; *that to him whose only*



*patrimony is his strength and ability to labour, that patrimony should be equal to his comfortable existence in society, in those relations in which he may be engaged as a son, husband, and father.*"—"*History of the Poor*," by Thomas Ruggles, Esq., F. A. S.

"The continuance of the Poor-Law Commission has been carried chiefly on the ground, that ministers have not had time to consider the question properly in the course of the session. There is such a thing as 'not finding time' to do a thing, but Lord John Russell's excuse is, that the House insisted on his proceeding with a Registration Bill, instead of allowing him to bring the whole subject of Poor-Laws under revision. The one Bill was the cause of the other not being introduced. This sounds at least like a reason, but it turns out, rather oddly for Lord John, that neither Registration nor Poor-Laws have been attended to. We do not mean that they have been thrown into the legislative limbo, but that neither measure has been discussed or passed. All we have for consolation is, Lord John Russell's assurance that both measures will be brought in as soon as possible next session. This is the old story—'Man never is, but always to be blessed.' All difficulties are smoothed, all asperities softened, by a reference to next session. Parliamentary shortcomings make long faces among the people, but the session that is to come is to make amends for all. This is the inference we are expected to draw from his lordship's official declaration. And truly we do not apprehend, that ministerial ingenuity will be able to devise many more excuses for the maintenance of the power usurped by the three Commissioners. A little time longer they must be endured; for a brief period they may issue their mandates to the Guardians of the different Unions, but the game of tyranny in this shape is nearly at a close—their reign over their pauper kingdom must speedily end. A revision of the law is the signal for the withdrawal of their authority. Their services can only be needed in case of the next Bill being as the present one, which we take to be impossible. Parliament dare not give permission, a second time, to the enforcement of the inhuman restrictions which are the peculiar property of the Poor-Law Commissioners. The mere fact of their being necessary for the working of the 'ma-

chinery' of the Bill will now be regarded as full proof of its inherent worthlessness."—*Sunday Times*, July 26, 1840.

"It will be seen by our Parliamentary report, that the 18th clause of the New Poor-Law Continuance Bill, for enabling the Guardians of one Union to contract or farm out their poor with the Guardians of another Union, was withdrawn by Lord John Russell for the present, after Lord Granville Somerset had forcibly pointed out the cruel bearing of its provisions, according to which paupers might have been drafted from their own to any other parish, where starvation chanced to be more stringently administered under the dispensations of the Commissioners, and therefore rates economised in both the one parish and the other. According to this clause, which, it must be observed, is intended to be re-introduced in some other shape, the unhappy tenants of workhouses, or applicants for relief, were to be let out on lease, for terms not exceeding seven years, to such contracting parishes as should bid for their support at the lowest money-rates of payment, so that side by side of the usual advertisements of 'Cattle taken to grass at per head,' may come to figure also, 'Paupers to let out on convenient terms; tenders for the supply of food at the lowest rate per head to be addressed, sealed, to the Poor-Law Commissioners, Somerset-house,' &c. This, however, was not the worst feature in the clause, for the paupers might be classified under it, and the husbands contracted for to one Union, the wives to another, the sons to a third, and the daughters to a fourth. We recollect that, in the first report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the working of the old Poor-Laws, it was made a special charge, that they tended to the destruction of family, that is parental, conjugal, filial, and fraternal affections, which of course the intent of a New Poor-Law morality was, in favourable contrast, to cherish and re-establish. It was with this laudable view, we presume, that the New Poor-Law theory for strengthening the ties of kindred was invented, under which each of the members of the same family, consisting of father, mother, sisters, and brothers, were to be separately transported for periods not exceeding seven years each, renewable on expiration of the terms *ad libitum* and *ad infinitum*, to separate workhouse Bastiles, as far asunder each from the other as within the extremities of the

kingdom could be contrived, so that no family bickerings, growing out of family communion, might by possibility arise to impair the family love which, at first and final parting with each other, to be immured in those living tombs from whose sad bourne, perhaps, never to emerge, was in all the full bloom and vigour of natural feeling."—*Courier*, April 2, 1841.

"The present race of philosophers, speculators, quacks, and reformers, hate the poor. They dream like madmen, and think like fools; and they imagine that nothing can give so much security to their lands, houses, factories, preserves, gardens, and other property, as rigorous enactments against the labouring classes, union prisons, spare diet, thin gruel, worse food than they give to their race-horses and hounds, and a complicated system of tyranny, which, separating men from their wives, and mothers from their children, is driving the aged poor to despair, and the able-bodied pauper, and occasional pauper, to deeds of revenge and every description of crime. This is very mistaken policy. To live at enmity with the masses is downright infatuation. To think of extorting obedience, and causing the laws to be respected, by keeping the labourer perpetually at the starving point, even when he is in the ripeness of his strength, and pinching and grinding him when he is too old to work, is criminal infatuation. The poorest person that lives within or without the walls of a workhouse, has feelings like other men—oftentimes more Christian and charitable feelings than the haughty and purse-proud millionaire. He is bound by the ties of blood and kindred like other men—he is easily soothed and gratified—a trifle less or more can make him happy or discontented—a smile may win him when a frown would not daunt him—and it is much less expensive to gain his affections, than to restrain his exertions or change his opinions. It is strange that all these natural qualities have of late years been totally overlooked by our reforming and speculating statesmen. They have forgot, or rather they seem not to know, that the poor are made of the same materials as themselves, and that they are quite as valuable in the estimation of their MAKER as the noblest peer in the realm. It is a curious fact, that since the House of Commons has been rendered more accessible to the mercantile classes, or, in other words, since the Reform Bill expelled the nominees of

the aristocracy from their seats, and admitted traders, pedlars, attorneys, apothecaries, and the writers of trashy novels and filthy plays in their room, the character of the House has been grievously deteriorated, and the laws founded in charity and beneficence have been superseded by harsh and unchristian enactments, all bearing most oppressively against the labourers of England, and are disgraceful to the statute-books. Session after session one quack succeeds another in introducing some new measure of coercion. Men who, within the present generation, have sprung from the lowest of the working classes, seem invariably the foremost in proposing some highly artificial measure for grinding the faces of their cousins, kinsmen, and other poor relations—in propounding some scheme by which a cheaper kind of food may be manufactured for the Union prisons—some cheaper substitute for beer, and *more wholesome*, of course—some compound *better* than beef or mutton soup—some coarse vegetable compost in lieu of wheaten bread, to *protect* the pauper from the speculative visits and experiments of the doctor—and some ingenious plan of making one blanket cover six adults and ten children. The labourers of England have cause for bitterly lamenting the day when the Reform Bill became the law of the land, and when the millowners and political economists, the Unitarians, Quakers, and other dissenters, became the legislators of this once happy kingdom."—*Liverpool Mail*, Jan. 16, 1841.

"Mr. Oastler said he must now beseech the meeting to lend him their calm and serious attention, whilst he appealed to them on behalf of the constitutional rights of the poor. Every one who venerates the constitution, the liberty of the subject, the rights of the Crown and of property; whoever respects and venerates the sacred rights of the poor, he should be able to prove, must on this occasion vote for Mr. Walter. The question of the New Poor-Law, he observed, was treated by the Whig candidate as a mere trifling, babbling matter; a subject scarcely worth notice. Now, that very circumstance ought to satisfy every honest, respectable man, that Mr. Wood is either perfectly ignorant of the principles and the character of that law, or if he be acquainted with them, then that it is his wish to establish slavery for liberty, and poverty and misery for hap-



piness and plenty. (Cheers.) There was one fact with regard to the New Poor-Law which ought never to be forgotten, and that was, that the Government sent out a set of Commissioners for the purpose of inquiring into the state and condition of the poor of England, for the avowed object of 'forcing the poor of England to live upon a coarser sort of food.' (Shame, shame.) He did not state this on his own authority, but it was a fact, that the late member for Oldham, Mr. Cobbett, had seen a copy of those instructions. (Shame, shame.) In proof that the statement was correct, he would mention, that Mr. Cobbett had moved in his place in Parliament for their production, which motion was resisted by the then Lord Althorp, whereupon Mr. Cobbett told the House, that he had himself seen them, and that they contained the diabolical instructions to which he had referred. (Hear.) This declaration of the late member for Oldham had not been denied by Lord Althorp, and therefore it was quite clear that the statement must have been true. (Hear, hear.) Well then, seeing that such an inquiry had been made, it was but natural that the Commissioners should keep out of the way, whenever they could so manage it, of the friends of the poor, (hear, hear,) and, in pursuance of that object, they had taken very good care not to come near him. They had kept out of the way of every person in his neighbourhood who possessed the confidence of the poor, or who was able to afford them any true account of their real condition. (Hear, hear.) Probably there were persons present who were not aware, that he (Mr. Oastler) had some years back put himself at the head of an agitation on behalf of the factory children, and that they had succeeded in compelling Government to pass a law to shorten the hours of labour, and, in other respects, to protect the children from the cruelties of which they had formerly been the victims. The hon. gentleman then went on, at considerable length, to say, that the factory masters, finding the number of children who were liable to work in factories very much diminished by the operation of that law, had entered into a bloody compact with the landholders, to assist them in carrying the New Poor-Law Act, provided the children of the agricultural labourers might be made available to their purposes, and be transported from the rural districts to their mills. The result of this cruel bargain had been the introduction of a

migration clause into the New Poor-Law. Under that clause, thousands of children had been transported from Kent, Norfolk, Suffolk, and other agricultural counties, to the manufacturing districts, and there they had been consigned to all the horrors of the factory system. The children had been forced, by the accursed workhouse test, off their native soil, and they had been actually sold to the factory masters. (Shame.) This had been done under a rule or order of the New Poor-Law Commissioners; many invoices of these poor slaves had come into his hands, which he had published, names, ages, prices, and everything. (Loud cries of shame, shame.) The poor creatures had no choice left them between going into the Union workhouses, and being there torn asunder from their parents, and their fathers and mothers separated from each other, or giving themselves up to the factory monster to transportation under the immigration clause. (Shame, shame.) The Government had employed Dr. Kay, who had been sent from Manchester, where he had published a book descriptive of the horrors of the factory system, which system he had declared was one of the most horrible it was possible to conceive; he had, however, been made an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner in Norfolk and Suffolk, where he told the agricultural labourers, that the factories, were very fine, comfortable places; and gave such glowing accounts of them, that eventually, in consequence of the lying delusions of that plausible demon of the Government, the poor children were transported by their own consent, thus obtained by threat and delusion, from their native fields, into the horrors of the pestilential factory. He spoke of what he knew; he had seen many of these poor victims; he had heard the cries of hundreds of these poor labourers; they had come to him with curses loud and long, against the hypocrites, the oppressors, and the tyrants of the New Poor-Law! (Cries of 'Shame, shame.') He understood that that same Dr. Kay was at present Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner in London. Oh, that he had been in that room, that he might try and make his icy blood to melt. (Loud cheers.) He believed this same Dr. Kay could never make a hundred pounds a-year by his wits in medicine; by his skill in deluding the poor, he makes just £1500 a-year!! And this is called saving!! (Hear, hear.) With respect to the New Poor-Law Bill, he asserted that

there was no such thing as mending it. It was bad in principle. (Cheers.) He wished to ask the meeting, and through them he would ask Mr. Wood's committee, who said that the Poor-Law was only a little, babbling, cackling question, whether they believed, that the industrious poor of England had a right to relief when they could not obtain work, (hear, hear,) because he had no hesitation in declaring it to be his opinion, that the poor had as distinct, as clear, and as indefeasible a *right to relief* out of the land, as the candidate for a seat in Parliament had to that seat when elected by the constituency, or a landlord to his rent. (Cheers, and cries of 'a greater right.') That was well, it was so; the apostle says, 'but the labourer must be *first* partaker of the fruits.' He (Mr. Oastler) maintained, that the industrious poor man had the *right* to relief out of the land, and that, if that *right* were destroyed, all other titles and institutions must be worthless, they must crumble into dust. (Cheers.) It was not so much the power which had been usurped by, or had been vested in, the three Commissioners (although he was always prepared to prove, that those powers were unconstitutional) of which he now complained, as it was, that the Bill denied, and was *intended* to destroy, the *right* of the poor man to relief out of his native land. (Hear, hear.)" — *Mr. Oastler's Speech at the Southwark Election*, Jan., 1840.

"I call attention to a most unsound spot in the constitution of the Bill, the poison of which infects it throughout all its ramifications. An attempt has been made to force upon all parishes, without regard to their various peculiarities, a code of regulations, enacted and carried out into effect by persons, who, whatever may be their other qualifications, have, in one sense, *no interests in common* with the parties to whom the law relates. Surely this looks like a departure from the legislative wisdom of our forefathers. It seems a strange anomaly, that the very persons who have been loudest in their declamations about political equality, extension of suffrage, &c., &c., should muster in the front ranks to defend a principle, the very essence of which is *arbitrary power*. What voice, let me ask, had the inmates of the Union workhouses in the measures which now consign them to those abodes of misery, where aged honesty and uncomplaining want are thrown into fearful contact with shameless impudence and hardened vice? the infallible result of that

political panacea, that universal remedy, the TEST. Shame on thee, England! that thy statute books should have been disgraced by such a word applied to such a purpose! Shame on thee, that thy poorer sons should have been flattered by the promise of civil rights, and, for a time drugged by its spell, should now awake to a consciousness that they have lost their personal freedom. Apply the principle to any question which affects the interests of a *class* of the community, advance it as an *argumentum ad hominem*, and see if it will stand a fair trial. Then I will appeal to the common sense of one great body, which has been called into existence by this law, the Guardians of the several parishes now subject to its control. Let us suppose that, in the present day, when great difference of opinion exists upon the corn-laws, Government were to decide upon adopting a new system, and resolved, with a view to increase our agricultural prosperity, that there should be a Central Board, Assistant Officers, and stated meetings of individuals from every parish; but that the latter should be compelled to adopt one universal method of farming throughout the country, at variance with their practice, in spite of their experience, and in defiance of their suggestions. I will not waste the time of my reader by dwelling upon the self-evident absurdity of such a proposal, or its probable reception. Our theories might be very satisfactory, but I fear our crops would fail. And yet, in this imaginary case, the trio who form the agricultural Board, and issue the compulsory regulations, would necessarily be *practical* men; but in the Poor-Law system this requisite has been overlooked. I complain that the framers of the law have not reasoned from facts to principles, but, laying down one fixed rule, have striven to make all things square with it. The very motion brought forward by its supporters for a *temporary* duration of any kind, is a confession of its impotence, and of the disgust which they themselves feel whilst they hug this incubus to their breasts. Truth is ever consistent, then why temporise in this matter? If the law be good for five years, why not for fifty?" — "*A Voice from Scotland, or, the English Poor-Law considered in its Principles and Administration*," by the Rev. J. V. Austin, April, 1841.

"Something must be done; things cannot continue in their present state; in fact, they will not. Pauperism is advancing with giant strides; and the re-



ports of the Commissioners fully warrant the assertion, that if their favourite TEST be strictly applied, our funds will be expended in building, not Union Houses, but Union Towns. Upon their own confession, the experiment has failed; and, whatever be the motives which induce its supporters to force upon the unwilling people its continuance for five years longer, it surely looks like unsound and sophistical reasoning, to make a merit of having departed from what has always been vaunted as its grand and distinctive principle, *the abolition of out-door relief*. Commons of England! the cause of humanity, the welfare of your country, demand that you should seriously deliberate, before you impose this galling yoke, for *any fixed time*, upon the shoulders of the oppressed. We ask not that you should at once uproot the present system; we trust that you have profited by the experience of late years, and will not seek for change merely in compliance with the innovating spirit of the age. But we do call upon you to lay aside all minor considerations; to view this not as a party question, but a moral lesson to the world at large; to avail yourselves of whatever good can be derived out of its materials; but, by all means, to reconstruct the Bill upon the approved bases of sound principles and equal justice. .... It would be desirable if our legislators could divest themselves of a feeling much too prevalent among the higher orders of society, which naturally affects the temper with which they act in these matters: namely, that the poor are generally *ungrateful*. My own experience, such as it is, induces me to believe otherwise, and to maintain, that they are more open to conviction, more easily managed, more sensible of kindness, than *any other class* of the community. But a workhouse order, from the hands of a Relieving Officer, is a positive non-conductor of sympathy; and when homes have been irrevocably destroyed, feelings outraged, and bodies starved, it needs some very logical reasoning to make the poor believe that their betters either care or feel for them. Those members of Parliament who hold honourable distinction as officers in our armies or fleets need not be reminded, that it is possible to combine the strictest discipline with the truest kindness. They know that the members of those bodies which constitute our strength, though drawn from the humblest ranks, are

highly susceptible; and will endure every hardship, provided they are encouraged by the love and respect of their superiors; they know, too, that dissatisfaction is usually the prelude to defeat. Landlords of England! there was a time when you or your sires were looked up to by the sons of the soil as their legitimate guardians; when a year of hard labour was cheered by a day's festivity, in which 'the master,' as they loved to call him, shared. Far others are their guardians and masters now! The aged cotter, who has toiled half-a-century upon an estate, and might seem to have earned a title to his humble home; oppressed by want, now pines within the walls of some castellated Union-House, surely not a fit companion for hoary vice, or decrepid imbecility! Are ye men? have ye hearts? If so, shake off your present apathy, which can arise only from ignorance of the real state of the poor, and from the insidious workings of the Bill, which have lulled you into a belief that, because your rates are as heavy or heavier than formerly, your responsibility is ended, your duty done. .... There is something *essentially wrong* in the present system. My reasoning may be illogical, but the facts are indisputable; and, strengthened in my convictions by daily testimony, I do not scruple to denounce the measure as *unsound in theory—unsatisfactory in practice—expensive in its machinery—arbitrary in its laws—unfeeling—unjust—UNCONSTITUTIONAL!*"—*Ibid.*

"With God's word, for my warrant, I solemnly denounce the present Poor-Law as entirely *UNSCRIPTURAL*. It is very likely, that this declaration will be viewed with contempt by many who evidently think religion has no connexion with legislature; whose conduct, during the last few years, has been marked by *liberality* of measures, and *laxity* of principle; and who, to use the words of a writer on the subject of oaths, 'profess reverence for the name of God, that they may wholly exclude it from the dealings of mankind, and may empty every social institution of the spirit which hallows it! Among such, my observations will pass for mere *preaching*; but, as I trust they may reach the hands of a few who regard the Bible as something more than a 'valuable record of antiquity,' or 'admirable text-book for our discourses,'—I shall avoid references. Those who study the Scriptures will know where to find my proofs; and, to others, who are not

in the habit of reading the word of God, research will do no injury. Among the many remarkable features of the Jewish Polity, there is none more striking, than the extreme care with which the inspired Lawgiver was directed to provide for the wants of the poor; amounting, as may be seen, to a most jealous watchfulness over their interests: even at a time when the Almighty, by his visible presence, was pleased to be the ruler of his people; or, to speak more learnedly, when the government was Theocratic. I cannot forbear to extract one passage from 'the law' of those days, which appears especially worthy the attention of our rulers in the present:—"If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.' Such was the principle upon which the dealings between the higher and lower classes among the Israelites were to be regulated: and, in fulfilment of the promise attendant on its observance, we find that peace and prosperity marked the reigns of all the kings whose delight it was to 'judge the people according to right,' and to 'defend the poor.' Scarcely a day passes in which this doctrine is not impressed upon our minds by precepts or allusions in the Psalms: whilst the books of the Prophets, which mark the decline of the nation, and foretell its overthrow, are loud in their denunciations against them that 'grind the faces of the poor;' that 'decree unrighteous decrees, and write grievances which they have prescribed, to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor

of the people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless.' We may be told, perhaps, that this administration was intended for a particular people, and adapted to their immediate circumstances; doubtless it was so: but is it not, to say the least, reasonable that some respect should be paid by all ages to the *broad principles* upon which, (with the utmost reverence be it spoken,) the Almighty appears to have based his laws?—principles, concerning which there can be no doubt, since the Son of the Most High has invested them with His own authority, and taught us, that the foundations of all sound morality, of all Christian ethics, and therefore of all Christian legislation, are *love to God, and love to man*. With regard to the former, it may be observed, that where once the feeling really exists, it is sure to increase and expand; whereas the natural selfishness of our hearts is likely to make us imagine, that the latter is sufficiently evinced by our concurrence in the generally received methods of doing good; as for instance, if we content ourselves with paying the rates which are by law required for the relief of the poor. But, that no such self-deception may avail, our Great Teacher has advanced another rule by which our sincerity may be tested: 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' Weighed in this balance the Poor-Laws of England are found wanting; tried by this standard, their deficiency is most lamentable. We have seen in the former part of these remarks, that they pay little regard to man as a fellow-creature. In vain do we look for anything like a recognition of the first and great commandment, love to God; which can only be manifested by an obedience to his sayings. Amongst these we find it recorded that, whilst 'Evil shall slay the *wicked*,—HE will be a refuge for the *oppressed* in the time of trouble;' and that 'the *needy* shall not always be forgotten.' The present Bill seems to confound what God has plainly made distinct; and, assuming to itself a prerogative equal to Omnipotence, strives to break down that moral barrier which His word has appointed, and His providence has hitherto sustained. 'What have we to do with character?' is the cry of these inventors of the Test;—that ungodly weapon which has inflicted a deadly wound upon our social system; and which, unless it be withdrawn, will effectually sever the ties that unite us to



our poorer fellow-subjects. 'We entirely disapprove of alms-giving,' is the dictum of the Central Board; very unlike the command of Him whose name we bear, whose example we profess to follow. He bade His servants do their alms in secret, so as not to be known of men; and, as if to prove that charity requires no fixed rule, but depends mainly upon the *spirit in which it is bestowed*, He has attached a rich blessing to that simple offering, a 'cup of cold water.' Away, then, at once with this glaring impiety—this gross affront to a God of justice! Build high your prison walls, increase your discipline, mark your deep sense of wickedness in every shape, restrain the vicious, employ the idle, reclaim the wandering; but seek not to deprive of their rights, their liberty, and their homes, those against whom poverty alone can be alleged."—*Ibid.*

"The poor have feelings, affections, and kindly associations as well as the rich, and if these are wantonly trampled under foot, when poverty, before whom they had never been above half-a-day's march, at last assails them, need we wonder that they should writhe under the infliction, and turn round upon their tormentors. The Corn-Law and the New Poor-Law cannot exist together. One or the other must be yielded up, if the aristocracy would heal that wide breach which has already separated the working classes to such a distance, and has sown so extensively the seeds of discontent among them."—*Sheffield Iris*, Feb. 9, 1841.

"The New Poor-Law stands forth in all that hideous deformity which at once disgraces a Christian country, and is discreditable to the legislature of a so-called free people; proclaims the cowardice and cruelty of its concoctors, and entitles them to the hatred of every philanthropist. It is 'cowardly,' because it gives powers which its authors were afraid to embody in the clauses of the Act itself; and 'cruel,' because it punishes poverty as a crime, subjects the poor to treatment worse than criminals, makes poorer the poor, and leaves them to the mercy (!) of their tyrant masters!—*Anti-Malthusian Blood-Sucker's Letter*, August 1, 1840.

"If the experience of the last seven years have not undeceived the Poor-Law Commissioners, the public is pretty well convinced that the workhouse system is vicious, and that the old law would have been amended by its limitation rather than by its extension. As a test of desti-

tution, the workhouse is unnecessary, unequal, and harsh—admitting the undeserving, and excluding altogether nine-tenths of the deserving poor from the temporary relief to which they have a thousand claims on the country."—*Lancet*, April 10, 1841.

"Mr. Boxer said, he was addressing them as fellow-slaves, for that they would be if this law was allowed to be renewed, as it would rob them of what few remaining liberties they possessed. They had been robbed of all control over their rates, the ancient rights which they once possessed taken from them, and that by a Bill which was hurried through the Houses of Parliament, took the country by surprise, and, before they were aware, repealed a law which had existed for 300 years. No doubt during that period discrepancies had grown up, and that they wanted pruning, but this did not suit the insatiable Whig Government; they saw that the people had the control of seven millions of money yearly, and, to gain possession of it, they passed this monstrous and arbitrary law, which took away the ancient right of the people to the soil and the tithes of the land. (Hear.) He would say again, they were slaves; for if the Government passed the Rural Police Bill they would remain no longer free men, and they would be trampled on without the power of resistance. When they brought in the Bill they said it was to increase the wages of the labourer, but this it had not done; it was the reverse, and the labourer was now being ground down to the earth. Certainly he was told he could emigrate to Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, or Van Diemen's Land; and they were sent abroad by the Government in the same manner as a cargo of Birmingham cutlery. (Hear, hear.) What was this state of things owing to? Why to that unmeaning word 'reform,' which had been raised by the Whigs throughout the country, the real meaning of which was deformity (cheers) in every shade and way. Look back to the year 1795. A man then earned, in 21 days, as an agricultural labourer, what now required 40 days' labour to gain. Everything was done to reduce the labourers, so as to fit them for transportation, and when reduced to that state they were sent away like a flock of sheep. This was the fact, for let them look at the second clause of the Poor-Law Act, and they would find that parishes possessed this power. (Shame.) The people were

reduced to the state of slavery into which the Asiatics have fallen. For instance, under the Poor-Law Act, an Assistant-Commissioner could come down to a Board of Guardians and say, this Guardian shall not be here, and he must leave the Board; and to do this, all he would have to show, would be the great seal of Somerset-house; in fact, he was armed with the tyrannical powers of an Asiatic mandarin. (Cheers.) Since the introduction of the Poor-Law, how many a poor creature had died of want, although coroners' juries returned a verdict 'Died by the visitation of God.' Certainly they could not charge a Commissioner with being the assassin, because he would say he did not give an individual but a general order. Again, they possessed the power to make or unmake Unions, and under their power the country became an automaton. To this dreadful state were the people of England reduced; and he had no hesitation in charging their members with being *participes criminis* in this transaction, for they did not oppose it as they ought to have done. It was a base and fraudulent neglect of their duty in not resisting it—they connived at the robbery which was meditated against the rights of the people at a time when they were humbugged by the name of reform—not the constitutional reform which you Chathams intended, but one which was brought forward for the sake of place. While they (the people) were thus in a state of inebriation, they were reduced to vassals and slaves. (Cheers.) That the Bill sanctioned murder, he would refer them to the case of the man Morris, aged 32. He applied to Peckham for relief; this was refused, although the poor fellow was starving: at length he got admitted, but before any food was given to him, he was tested and set to work to grind corn, and while at work on the mill he died. (Cries of 'shame.') How long Heaven would suffer this state of things he could not say, and yet their hireling press said, the Bill worked well. Did it not encourage white slavery—were not children sent out from workhouses by what were denominated Christian Societies, and sold for £7 15s. a-head, and that to a parcel of Dutchmen, who had no feeling for these friendless and unprotected children? It was in this way the slave-trade began, and which, it appeared, was intended to be continued merely in changing it from black to white slavery. From a report which he had read in the *Times* of that day, an attempt

was made to contradict this charge, but it could not be done. If they but looked to the operation of the bastardy clauses, it was enough to stultify their senses. Down at Sandwich, a girl of the name of Dandson had drowned herself and infant in the river Stour. This part of the country he knew well, and a few years ago the place did not contain a public prostitute. At the recent Chester assizes, three females for child murder had been cast for death; the Home-Secretary was afraid of carrying out this sentence for fear of setting the country in a flame; but his commutation was perfectly Draconian. In Rome's worst days such a sentence was not inflicted. Hurling from the Tarpeian rock was mild to that of the Home-Secretary. The punishment was remitted to five years' in the Penitentiary, three months out of each year to be passed in solitary confinement, the effect of which would be to make them lunatics, and, at the expiration of the five years, to be transported for life to a penal settlement. (Loud cries of 'Shame.') Such was the hell-born soul which guided the councils of this country. He could not express in sufficiently strong terms his indignation; but he trusted so loud would be the voice of the country as to cause the Government to pause in its career. He regretted their members were absent, and unless they did their duty on the present occasion in Parliament, he should call on them for their resignations. (Loud cheers.) Now was the time for the people to act with decision, for there was but one step for them to take which would determine whether they would be free men or slaves. (Mr. Boxer sat down amidst tremendous cheering.)—*Southwark Anti-New Poor-Law Meeting*, May 1, 1839.

"Mr. Day observed, that it was intended to call upon the members to oppose the measure, instead of petitioning the House of Commons, from which they could expect nothing, as it had hitherto packed the committee relative to the Poor-Law Bill, and secured only packed evidence from packed witnesses; for, with one or two exceptions, the whole of the evidence heard was either Poor-Law Commissioners, clerks to Boards, or Guardians favourable to the measure. (Hear, hear.) Therefore it would be useless to apply to the House of Commons for relief; but if the Members of Parliament did their duty, then would this bill be repealed. The question was one of vast importance to every man, from the rate-payer to the



pauper, especially as they were all entitled to relief when required—a right which existed previously to the 43d of Elizabeth, and which was vested in the soil, but which right the present bill had taken away. This right in the land was never attempted to be touched until the introduction of the Enclosure Acts, and as they increased so did the poor-rates. This point had been most ably stated by Mr. Walter, the late member for Berkshire, in his place in Parliament; and he regretted, from the variety of facts he should have to state, he could not read to them from a published pamphlet containing the report of his speeches. The evils under which the poor laboured had been gradually increasing; for in 1776 corn, he found, was 40s. the quarter, while in 1813 it was 128s. a-quarter, the price of labour remaining much the same. This was not a party question; it had nothing to do with either Whig or Tory; it was a question between the rich and the poor; and as the act had worked badly, it was now necessary that it should be repealed. The Poor-Law Act had had five years' trial, and it had decidedly failed; this its framers knew, for what were they attempting to do? Why, to renew the bill with greater powers to the Commissioners, and then backing it by a rural police for the purpose of putting down the poor if they should happen to complain. He had heard, since he had taken up the question, many say that the bill worked well. 'See,' said its advocates, 'we can give out-door relief.' He would tell those gentlemen they were not carrying out the bill, and that they would soon find out if Lord J. Russell carried his new bill; let them wait till then, and they would soon find that they were tricked. ('Hear,' and 'That will be it.') What did Lord J. Russell intend to do? Why, to do away with the Gilbert Unions; and here he would beg to remind the people of Manchester, that they would then have the New Poor-Law forced upon them, and be liable to all the pains and penalties which the Commissioners might think proper to impose on them. (Mr. Day here entered into a detailed statement of the mode of relief, the interference of the Commissioners as to whether one or two shillings should be given per week to a poor old woman; and the law of settlement, which, instead of being simplified, had been rendered more difficult, in the course of which statement he was repeatedly cheered.) Under the old law

the rate-payers possessed a control over the funds; now, if the Poor-Law Commissioners thought proper to order £10,000 or £20,000 to be expended, the rate-payers could not help themselves; and how was that done? Why, by the system of proxy voting, which entirely robbed them of all their rights. (Shame.) He would instance it in St. George's parish, which contains 50,000 inhabitants; he and two others had sufficient proxies to return all the Guardians, and that in opposition to the rate-payers. (Shame.) Mr. Day here adverted to the misstatements as to the savings which the Commissioners had put forth in their reports, but these having been already noticed in the *Times*, it is unnecessary to re-state them. He would now make one observation as to the test. Lord John Russell had declared, that no distinction could be made between the vicious pauper and the virtuous one—that they were all entitled to the same mode of relief, namely, a bare sufficiency of food (shame); and those unfortunate creatures, where the law is carried out, never leave the workhouse—or, more properly, the Bastile—until carried out; yet, from the destitution which existed, their places were filled, although Mr. Mott had declared, that the sight of a scaffold before a workhouse would be quite sufficient to drive the poor away. Although there were a variety of other points to which he was anxious to advert, yet he found it would be impossible; therefore he would merely content himself with saying a few words on the bastardy clauses. They were told that these clauses would make the women more moral. How was it to be done? Why, heaping all the fault on the female, and permitting her vagabond seducer to go free. Was it not absurd to talk about curbing the feelings of human nature? And yet the poor and unprotected female, who was left open to the wiles of man, was punished—driven to commit the crime of murder on her helpless offspring, because the Poor-Law had robbed her of all protection. (Hear, hear.) He would now conclude by expressing a hope that their members would do their duty in their place in Parliament, and that the representatives of every other place would be called on by their respective constituencies to do the same, and then the Poor-Law Bill would be kicked out of the House of Commons. (Loud cheers.)—*Ibid.*

"Since he last had the good fortune to address a meeting in this metropolis,

all he then said had been confirmed by subsequent experience, wherever the Poor-Law Commissioners had been enabled to establish their despotic power. Owing to the strenuous and patriotic exertions of some who sat around him, and above all of his friend Mr. Oastler (cheers), and Mr. Richardson, of Manchester—owing to the courage evinced by the people themselves, this law happily had not yet been carried into execution in the manufacturing districts. (Cheers.) Such had been the disgust, such the great, general, and just discontent which had been engendered by the cruelties which had taken place, that throughout those extensive and populous districts numerous associations had been formed for the sole and distinct object, unconnected with any other political purpose whatever, of obtaining the repeal of this obnoxious law. (Cheers.) He hoped, by the formation of a central society, these associations would be extended to other districts where they had not yet been formed, and that being generally established throughout the country, they would acquire that numerical force which, directed by unity of action, could not fail of complete success. (Cheers.) For whatever delusion might exist, both in the Administration and Parliament of the country, if the voice of the people were generally raised and expressed, as it ought to be, in a voice of thunder, calling for the restoration of their rights—of those rights, founded on nature, secured by positive statute, and enacted during a period of more than two centuries, that voice could not be raised in vain. (Cheers.) Such was the discontent that had been excited by the New Poor-Law, that unless it should be repealed, speedily and entirely repealed (cheers), no one could say for how long, or how short a period, it would be possible to preserve the peace and protect the property of the country. (Cheers.) It appeared, therefore, that not a moment should be lost, that no exertions should be spared, in establishing in the metropolis an association, to be in constant communication with the other bodies which had been formed in different parts of the country, so that where hitherto the agricultural labourers had appeared inactive or supine, they might give vigour and energy to their exertions. (Cheers.) But, although it was undoubtedly true, that more petitions had proceeded from the manufacturing than from the agricultural districts, it should not be supposed that

the silence of the rural districts implied consent. (Cheers.) They would learn from a friend of his from the county of Suffolk, that intimidation was used there and in other counties for the purpose of preventing the labouring classes from freely expressing their opinions on this question. In the present deplorable and disgraceful state of thralldom, they were unable to express the grievances they so strongly felt, and which could not be allowed much longer to continue without consequences the most calamitous. Nor was it any apology for the present law, that some persons had conceived an unjust prepossession against the former poor-law. It was utterly impossible to suppose that the poor-law should have existed for two centuries, and yet only at the conclusion of that period to have brought forward those evils which were said to be inherent in it. The former amount of the poor-rates was not the disease of which complaint was made—it was only a symptom of the disease—the natural result of the pauperism which had arisen from other causes. (Cheers.) But, whatever might be thought of the former poor-law, their object now was simply and singly to obtain a repeal of the present poor-law (cheers), and then, speaking his own individual opinion, he thought they should re-enact, in all its simplicity, the statute of Elizabeth without any alteration, but with such additions as would be beneficial to the labouring classes. (Cheers.) Having stated thus briefly the general nature and object of the purpose for which they had assembled, it would be altogether unpardonable in him to trespass any longer on their time. The resolutions would be moved by one of the firmest friends of the labouring classes, whom they had long revered, and in whom they justly placed great confidence—he meant Mr. John Fielden (cheers), and they would be seconded by Mr. Walter (loud cheers), who, during the last session of Parliament, exerted himself with the most laudable patriotism, and the most indefatigable perseverance in collecting evidence on the subject, and in endeavouring to obtain a repeal of the New Poor-Law. (Loud cheers.) Mr. Dewdney, a clergyman from Sussex, one of the witnesses examined before the committee; Mr. Oastler, from Yorkshire, and Mr. Richardson, from Manchester, would also address the meeting. (Cheers.) He entreated, he conjured them, as one who had entirely at heart the welfare, the interests,



and the rights of the labouring classes (cheers)—as one who knew and felt that no other class of the community could prosper if they were in affliction (cheers)—as one who was aware that no property could be safe unless their rights were secured (cheers)—he entreated them as one who had never pursued any object of personal vanity or ambition; who had constantly before his eyes, without looking to the right or left, the welfare of his fellow-citizens (cheers)—he entreated them, on this occasion, to obtain that triumph over the friends and supporters of the measure—that triumph over the triumvirate of Somerset-house (cheers)—that triumph which could only be obtained by unity of purpose, by directing all their exertions, by confining all their deliberations and discussions, to this one object, abstaining altogether from introducing any extraneous or irrelevant matter, however it might appear on any other occasion.”—*Earl Stanhope, Freemasons’ Tavern, Feb. 19, 1838.*

“*Melius est omnia mala pati, quam malo consentire*, is an established maxim of right; insomuch that a king cannot legally dispense with *malum en se*, nor can the ‘omnipotence of Parliament’ establish it by statute, because, by the renovating principle of the common law, any such statute must be deemed *null* and *void*—in itself a mere *corruptela*, and no statute.”—*Granville Sharp.*

“Mr. Walter said, he felt great pleasure in attending their summons, to propose a resolution which had been assigned to him for the purpose of resisting the continuation of the New Poor-Law. They were now arrived at the period when, according to the original Act, the Commissioners were to have been withdrawn. This was the time when the law was to have stood upon its own feet (cheers and laughter)—was to have walked and run on by itself, without the aid of these despotic male nurses, the Commissioners, who had hitherto had it in leading-strings. And what was the case really at this season of puberty? That the law could neither stand nor go, but was still to be upheld by these its original nurses. (Hear, hear.) It was said, indeed, that it was to be continued but for one year longer. He did not believe that the authors or upholders of the law could at the present moment assign any reason why it should be better able to support itself a year hence than it was at this time. The fact was, that it must

always, so long as it existed as a law, be maintained and supported by its present agency, by the Commissioners; for it was a perpetual violation of the rights of nature and the principles of humanity (cheers); and, therefore, if left to itself—if deprived of this artificial and expensive support—the rights of nature and the principles of humanity would instantly overthrow and trample it under foot. (Cheers.) It was impossible to live in the perpetual violation of nature except by violent and artificial means. (Cheers.) So multiplied were the evils of this law, and so much had come to his knowledge of the mischiefs which it worked, that he hardly knew where to begin first. He was absolutely distracted by abundance rather than perplexed by selection. If they went back to the origin of this law, they would find, that with much abuse of the poor—‘that they were thoughtless, reckless, improvident, and so forth,’—there was one grand acknowledgment on the part of the rich supporters of the Bill—that they themselves had been liable to the imputation of improvidence, and that from such improvidence their estates were in so unsatisfactory a condition, that they could not continue to afford the provision for the poor which they had hitherto received, and to which they had a prescriptive right. (Hear, hear.) This subject was so wound up with the conduct of distinguished persons, that he had some pain in introducing it. Sir James Graham, in a speech in the House of Commons, March 1, 1834, on a motion for altering the corn-laws, said, ‘If the effect of the proposed measure should be to reduce rents 20 per cent., he spoke advisedly when he said, that two-thirds of the landed property of England would change hands.’ And respecting the noble lord who carried this measure through the House of Commons, and was himself the Chairman of two Boards of Guardians, in Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire, he found in that same year the following paragraph in the newspapers:—‘Lord Spencer died much less wealthy than had been supposed, and since his demise the greatest economy prevails at Althorp. All the servants have been discharged, much of the park has been ploughed up, and the present peer contents himself with a single servant.’ Lord Brougham told the peers, ‘that the chief point involved in the Bill was, whether their lordships should lose their properties or not.’ This,

therefore, he had no question, might be assumed as the moving cause of the Bill—that a large portion of the landed interest throughout the country was in that state of embarrassment, from no fault of the poor, be it observed, but from improvidence elsewhere—that recourse was had to a diminution of the poor-rates by the infliction of this Bill; and that hope, he had no doubt, would prove as delusive as the law itself was cruel and unconstitutional. If from the origin of the Bill he passed on to its operation, he would take care to give them nothing upon that subject on his own authority, but everything from unquestionable documents. He would give an instance of its working from a rural district, that of Alderbury, in Wiltshire. The Chairman of the Board of Guardians thus wrote:—After stating that the winter had been one of unexampled hardship to the peasantry, he said, ‘I recollect at no time more people unemployed, no time when distress has assumed a severer form. In some cases the usual winter arrangements have been disturbed; in many more the Guardians, seeing a certain expense incurred by the machinery of the Board, were determined to meet it by increased economy—perhaps severity of conduct towards the poor: whilst the objects of relief themselves occasionally added to their own misery by distrusting the new authority when offers were made to them of taking their children into the poor-house. From this state of things we are now in a great measure relieved.’ And what did the meeting think was the remedy for these evils? What was the method by which they had been relieved? He would tell them in the writer’s own words:—‘The experience our labourers have had (said he) of the rigid investigation attending application for relief, their dislike of separation from their children, and their horror of the workhouse, have induced some hundreds to emigrate.’ Was this the humanity of British legislation—was this the becoming character of an English law, that when carried into effect it was to drive our fellow-Englishmen, with their suffering wives and children, into eternal banishment from their native land? He could quote several instances of a similar character, especially from Norfolk, Suffolk, and Hampshire. But in this instance they had their opponents confessing that emigration was one of the effects of this cruel law; and, in addition to that, there was undeniable evidence to support this

charge against them, that, while the pauper was oppressed at home, they held out the most false and deceptive hopes to him of the wealth and happiness which he was to enjoy by emigrating to the opposite side of the globe. (Cheers.) Young women are promised marriage settlements in Australia (a laugh)—artisans, enriching wages. The Government agent in Canada told our people, that ‘industrious men can earn as much there in two days as will support a family a week; country girls will readily obtain from £9 to £18 a-year. The industrious labourer will in five or six years be the owner of from 50 to 100 acres of good land, with plenty for his family to eat and drink, a couple of milch cows, and future independence.’ (Incredulous laughter.) Whereas, with respect to Australia, the authors of these seducing stories, on the exposure of their falsehoods in the House of Commons, at once broke up their association, being forced to acknowledge the fact, that the country was too much demoralized to admit of having unprotected women sent to its shores.”—*Mr. Walter at the Freemasons’ Tavern Meeting, June 24, 1839.*

“It had been said that the New Poor-Law could not be carried into effect without that central control which was almost essential to its working. Now, he would not deny, that under such a system they must have some central control, but it was not necessary, he did not see why, the controlling power should be in the metropolis. He could not see why it might not be exercised in a provincial town as well as in London. Looking, then, at the main principles which were involved in this Bill, it remained to be shown that it had worked for the happiness or improvement of the people. That had not been shown. Nay, even, it had not been proved, that there had been that reduction of expense on which the promoters of the Bill had calculated as one of its important results. It was natural that a Poor-Law district should be under local Guardians. Why might not that trust be confided to such a body, as well as to the body of Commissioners sitting in the metropolis? To what had the principle of parochial Unions led? It had led to the union of Unions, and in following that principle out, by which paupers were brought from great distances to those great Unions, he did not see why the pauper peasants of Buckinghamshire might not be transferred to Lancaster on the same principle. In fact, there was



nothing to prevent it, for the Commissioners would have the power. Indeed, no man who had at all attended to the working of the Bill would deny, that the Commissioners under this Bill would have a power which had never been exercised by the Parliament of England. If, then, the present Bill should turn out to be, as he feared it would, an exaggerated copy of the former Act, the noble lord must not be surprised at the opposition which it would encounter in and out of that House. He repeated his admission, that centralization was useful and salutary in many instances, but they ought to be jealous of its introduction to such cases as it would be applied to under this law. It would have that most injurious tendency of making the Government strong, and society weak, instead of having that position reversed, as it ought to be. Looking at the principles which the Bill involved, feeling convinced that even in those features on which it had been most warmly supported by its advocates it was defective, believing it to be the secret cause of the discontent and outrage which had prevailed in the country, and that in it the true character of the people had never been consulted, he should give it his strongest opposition, and would now move, as an amendment to the motion of the noble lord, that the Bill be read a second time that day six months."—*Mr. D'Israeli, House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

"There was no redress, no appeal for the unfortunate workhouse poor; the Board did what they pleased—imprisoned and tortured at will. The most atrocious cruelty might be inflicted on the poor man; yet to whom was he to appeal for redress? How was he to obtain it? How could he even communicate with his relations under this atrocious and infernal system? He could describe it in no other terms. He had no desire to give a personal colouring to his remarks; but he was discharging what he considered a most important duty, since he had had more opportunities of witnessing the operation of the existing law than any other man in that House. (Hear, hear.) He was stating facts, in every instance, which had fallen under his own observation. He begged to ask whether the noble lord, by his present Bill, bettered the condition of the poor in any one respect? The noble lord had increased the powers of the Commissioners. These powers were already so extensive, that all respectable

men were driven from the Boards of Guardians. The noble lord had increased the power of the Commissioners, and taken away from that of the Guardians. (Hear, hear.) And this he had done in a Bill which was avowedly for the amendment of the existing law. He entreated the noble lord to ask permission to withdraw the Bill, and introduce another for the purpose of getting rid of the Commission, in about two years' time, so as to put the Poor-Law on a rational and intelligible basis, and make it capable of being recognized by the constitutional authorities of the land. (Hear, hear.) If the law continued to be administered as it had hitherto been, it would exist only in the feelings of the Commissioners, and not in the statute-book—in the Commissioners' caprice, in their whim of the moment. Talk of uniformity; there never was a more chequered thing than the Poor-Law in its present shape. The Commissioners themselves acknowledged it. Every Union had its own particular rule as to the formation of new districts, as well as to a variety of other matters. It was a miserable, pettifogging system. Let them take the 11th rule—"That if for any special reason it appears fit to the Board of Guardians to dispense with article 10 in respect of any married couple, both of whom are infirm through age or any other cause, the Guardians shall be at liberty to direct that such couple shall have a sleeping apartment separate from the other paupers;" but mark the condition:—"Such resolution, together with the reason for it, shall be entered in their minutes of proceedings, and a copy of the same shall be transmitted"—from the Land's-end—"to the Poor-Law Commissioners for their consideration and approbation, without which the resolution shall have no effect." And the gentlemen of England would consent to act on these Boards! He asked whether they would so far debase themselves? He was satisfied, that if they took their places on these Boards, it was only from a desire to benefit the poor; for surely they could not otherwise submit to these gross and foul indignities. (Hear, hear.) The Guardians had not the power to order these poor decrepit beings to be permitted to sleep in a separate apartment without the special sanction of the Poor-Law Commissioners!"—*Mr. Wakley, Ibid.*

"For what purpose was the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill introduced? What objects had its originators in view in con-

cocting the measure? It was certainly to benefit some one class of the community; but he maintained that it was impossible for the hon. member who supported the Government measure to specify any one class who had been benefited by the alteration in the law. The condition of the poor had not been alleviated, and very little or no saving had been made in the parish rates. It was true, as had been stated, that in the Union of Alnwick £2,000 a-year had been saved, but in the Union in which he resided no such good result had followed; in fact, no saving had been made at all. It had been found that men could not be got to act as Guardians, unless they were well remunerated for their services, and this payment must be made from the private rates. According to the noble lord's bill, all paid Overseers would be ineligible to act as Guardians. He (Mr. Liddell) considered this clause very objectionable; and if not struck out, or materially altered, it would throw many Unions into great disorder. But his great and serious objection to the Bill now before the House was, in consequence of its perpetuating the Central Board for so long a period as ten years. Against this portion of the Bill he entertained well-founded and constitutional objections. Was such a Board, with almost unlimited powers, with a jurisdiction extending over the whole of this country, endowed with legal power to govern almost every parish and district in the kingdom, possessing authority beyond the law, for one moment to be tolerated? He entreated the House to pause before they allowed a Bill to receive the sanction of the Legislature containing a clause of such a character. He could not believe that the House would give its consent to the Bill. It was not only the object of the Government measure to empower the Central Board to exercise their authority for a period of ten years, but the Commissioners were to be endowed with new and extraordinary powers. To the seventh clause of this Bill he had a serious objection. It proposed to relieve the Commissioners at Somerset-house from the necessity of specifying and publishing the rules which they intend to issue for the government of the Unions. In his Union much evil had arisen from the circumstance of the Central Board not issuing specific regulations for its government. He considered this clause pregnant with evil, and one which he could not support. He (Mr. Liddell) agreed with the hon. member for

Finsbury in lamenting the want of a court of appeal from the judgments of the Poor-Law Guardians and from the central board. If such a court were established, it was his belief that many cases of hardship, cruelty, and oppression, would be exposed to the public eye, and thus benefit would result. The opponents of this measure had been asked what they would substitute instead of the Central Board, were its functions to cease? It was his belief, that the Board of Guardians, if properly constituted, could act for all useful purposes without the Central Board. He did not believe for one moment, if they were delegated with proper authority, that any of those evils which spring out of the operation of the old law would again arise. It was his opinion, that the Guardians of the poor were alive to the maladministration of the old system of poor-laws, and that they never would dare to introduce into the districts over which they presided the objectionable portions of that system. On these grounds he was induced to believe, that the existence of a Board of Guardians rendered a Board of Commissioners at Somerset-house unnecessary. He thought that the relief afforded to the poor by rule and square, as measured out by the Commissioners at Somerset-house, was abhorrent to the feelings of the humane, and repugnant to the genius of Christianity. Its effect had been to alienate the affections of the people from those who were placed in authority over them. Cases of great hardships had occurred; the feelings of the community had been blunted; and a great portion of the public had been induced to array itself in opposition to a law which oppressed so severely the poorer classes of the community. For these reasons he (Mr. Liddell) would not consent to the existence of the Central Board for a longer period, than was necessary for them to wind up their accounts with the public."—*Mr. Liddell, Ibid.*

"Mr. Muntz was satisfied that much injustice was done in consequence of the lawmakers acting on the reports of others on subjects of which they had themselves no knowledge. If the noble lord at the head of the Colonial Department, or any other member of the Government, served six months in the office of a Poor-Law Guardian, they would never think of enforcing such a law as the present. The New Poor-Law made no distinction between the honest and industrious, and the idle and drunken. The truth of this came



under his own observation, in the instance of a man who had been recommended to him for employment, and whom he had tried to serve, but could not procure him work. When asked why he had not applied to his parish, the poor man's answer was, 'I have applied, but before receiving relief I should first sell all my furniture, and what should I then do when I came out of the workhouse?' The system of compelling a poor man labouring under temporary distress to resort to the workhouse lowered him in his self-esteem, and produced a consequent demoralization. The faults of the old system were not inherent in the law, but were the result of its maladministration. As to the saving which was said to be effected by the new law, he had considerable doubts. That the present system was harshly administered he was perfectly satisfied, for he knew no man who could serve the office of overseer for six months without his feelings, however fine at first, becoming callous, and then what must it be with those who acted as masters of workhouses for five or six years? The cases of cruelty were more numerous than met the ear, for there were few men who had the nerve of the hon. member for Finsbury, and few Guardians who cared so much for the poor as the Rev. Mr. Osborne."—*House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

"Mr. D'Israeli said, he was well aware of the difficulty which was found in inducing the Legislature to retrace its steps on a great measure of this kind. He was also aware, that when any great measure on which the country had been much excited became the law of the land, it seldom happened that it realized the hopes of those by whom it had been supported. This he believed would be found to have been the case with the measure which the motion of the noble lord was about to prolong. Still he despaired of being able to induce its supporters to retrace their steps respecting it. Before agreeing to this measure, he thought it was of great importance for the House to inquire whether the Bill had those remedial effects which had been predicted of it, whether the carrying out of certain principles which it embraced possessed a beneficial influence on the condition of the poor of the country, and whether there had not been certain influences at work to mar the good which its supporters had contended it was calculated to produce. In offering a few observations on those points he begged the indulgence of the House for a

short time, the more particularly because many taunts had been thrown out against those who were loud in decrying the measure on the hustings, but who were said to be discreetly silent on it in that House. He would address himself to what he considered the salient and original principles of the Bill—the principles upon which all its details must mediately or immediately depend. He wished to see whether the noble lord had profited by the experience of the last six or seven years. Of the Bill, as it at present existed, one of the most important features was doubtless the union of parishes. It was a proposition that met with considerable discussion when it was first addressed to the notice of the House and of the country. For his own part, he did not think that it had ever received that attention which it ought to have commanded. The union of parishes was, in fact, a total revolution of the ancient parochial jurisdiction of England. That jurisdiction was the most ancient in the country, much more ancient than the political jurisdiction, one which bore a much nearer affinity to the lower classes of society, than any political forms which they could possibly invent. He (Mr. D'Israeli) thought that the alteration in this respect was as great a social revolution as had ever been effected. (Hear, hear.) There were many reasons given at the time for a measure which was generally recognized as one of a very strong character. Necessity was the plea by which it was supported; they were told that they could never obtain an efficient and economical management of the poor but by the union of parishes. It was then said, and it might be said now, that the abuses of the old system, which were never denied, grew out of circumstances which did not depend upon the size of the parishes. It was on that occasion particularly pointed out to the House, that the reform of the old system had already commenced in England, and had proceeded to a considerable extent for many years before the Government projected interfering. Several parishes were adduced: many parishes indeed were quoted in the original reports; and in the first papers brought before Parliament several instances were adduced of parishes which had effected this self-reformation with the most complete success. It was alleged by the Government, that if they left this reformation to the parishes themselves, it would most probably fail, or, that if it succeeded, its progress must be slow. (Hear,

hear.) There were some who thought that it was better that self-reformation should accompany self-government. There were some who thought that there was no probability that the Government would interfere. For what had the Government, as far as its domestic policy was concerned, ever effected in England! It had, indeed, sometimes promoted commerce by granting bounties, sometimes fostered manufactures by lessening the duties; but, so far as our domestic economy was concerned, there was nothing of any great benefit, of any vastness, or of a comprehensive character in our social condition, for which we were indebted to the Government. The Government did not originate our system of national education. The Government did not institute our universities, or endow our colleges. The Government did not even create our colonial empire. It was not the Government of England that conquered India. It did not build our citadels, make our roads, or build our bridges; and even in the present age, when the Government interfered in almost every great undertaking, it did not construct our railways. The Government, however, did interfere, and terminated the whole parochial jurisdiction of the country; and, certainly, it was impossible to conceive any revolution, although it might not have the hubbub and the individual interest of political revolution, that exercised a greater influence on the condition of the people at large than that interference did. But what had been the consequences? Nobody would deny, that if they had not outraged the constitution, or violated the laws, which they might alter when they liked, they had done that which was much more important than constitution or law—they had outraged the manners of the people. No statesman would treat that consideration with contempt, and he thought it was doubtful whether any pecuniary or financial consideration could weigh against the injury which by outraging the manners of the people they committed. But had they gained that pecuniary advantage? As far as could at present be ascertained, the parochial constitution of England had been destroyed for a mere sordid consideration (hear, hear), and that sordid consideration they were in the miserable position of finding they had not obtained. It was now matter of notoriety, for they had it from authority, that the sum which had been levied on the people of England for the year that had terminated, according to the official

statement, amounted to more than £1,200,000. (Hear.) If that sum were added to what had been expended last year, and the increase of the county-rates, and the universal promise in every parish of the increase of the poor-rates for the coming year, were taken into consideration, he would ask whether there was any man bold enough to say, that before two years had expired the expenditure for the Poor-Law would be less, than it was two years before the present law came into operation. (Hear, hear.) He mentioned the period of two years because, in the average formed by the Commissioners, they omitted the year immediately preceding the commencement of the new law; the practical consequence of that would be, that they must probably pay as much as they did under a system of abuse, and without any of the advantages that resulted from that system."—*House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

"What can we say, how can we meet and assuage the cravings of self-interest? how can we baffle and defy the suggestions of expediency, when it is notoriously sanctioned as the leading principle, by the King, the Parliament, and the Episcopacy? Are we to call in the aid of the Commissioners in preference to the Bible? I wish to put the subject only in a fair point of view; I have no occasion, and God knows no inclination, to speak disrespectfully of any superior; but when we discuss public measures, public men must appear also. I yield not to the most strenuous advocate of the new law in believing the devotion (?) and anxiety (?) of the present Commissioners to '*do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God*;' it is, I repeat, the principle against which I protest; the principle of violating the laws of justice whenever a majority can be got together to effect it—and, since expediency has begun its march, let the opposites of poverty look to their rights and landmarks, and the opposites of the people beware of the consequences. The Commissioners may for this generation do good (?), and property may prosper; but it will be the prosperity of fools, which is a snare in which they are taken—of a man, who finds it easy to raise money *when it is expedient*, and thinks not of the hour when it will not be convenient to repay—it will be the prosperity of Haman erecting the gallows for Mordecai. 'A new broom sweeps clean;' but let the present and past state of the church declare the advantages of discretionary power: let any one



study the history of Dispensation, and he will never advocate anything but a *Lex Scripta*: he will then, if he does not now, see the evils of speculating upon human strength, which has never yet developed itself. Why we are to presume Commissioners better than the Archbishop of Canterbury, and trust power to irresponsible power, when we know the consequences, I leave to Parliament to announce—*it is simply a question of expediency.*—“*Church Reform.*” By the Rev. Edward Duncombe, 1835.

“Do I charge the Commissioners or the Parliament with evil motives in devising the New Poor-Law, which would be far more properly called the New Property-Law? No; I do not: but I do suspect them of judicial blindness: and I do forewarn landed proprietors to beware, lest they themselves fall into the pit which is digged to protect them. For look at the possible sequel of this property-law: is there any encouragement to industry or frugality affixed to it? any clause recommending landlords never to let a cottage without ‘a rood of land’—any clause to secure, wherever possible, for the poor in towns, that so much of the land adjacent shall be let to the poor at a fair accommodation-rent as will give all householders under a certain rent the option of ‘*wholesome store by light labour spread*?’ is there any promise, any *praise for them that do well*? No, forsooth: there is no redeeming attention to the poor of this sort: and why not? because it would be an infringement on the existing rights of landlords—because Parliament has no power to interfere with these. Whence then does it derive the power to abridge the ‘rights of the people?’ why does it not exhibit the same delicacy and respect for these? ‘*It is a question of expediency.*’ Be it so—how is the question decided; by an appeal to numbers—by a majority of the two Houses of Parliament. It was so: and now look at the possible consequences—and if you are a candid, reader, unpledged to any ministry, unprejudiced to any party, you will agree with me, that

‘Even now the devastation is begun,

And half the business of destruction done.’

You will agree with me, that no one act of the legislature can contribute more directly and abundantly to equality in all things, than this mis-called Poor-Law, devised for the protection of property, not for the maintenance, or employment, or encouragement of the poor. It is not the number of persons, whom this new enact-

ment will at first oppress, which renders it dangerous to every existing institution: but it is *the principle which it has recognized as the primary motive in man*: the principle of expediency and self-interest—for suppose that it is at one fell swoop proposed to appropriate all the property, and destroy all the exclusive rights of civil corporations—What, let me ask, can the authors and supporters of this Poor-Law reply? they may say it is *not expedient*. But the proposers of destruction may reply, Parliament sets up numbers as the standard of right, and there is a majority in the country, who think it expedient that the dock revenues of Liverpool should be taken in part payment of taxes. It is no longer a question of justice, but it is a question of expediency: how, let me ask, are such proposals as these ever to be put to silence, if the legislature sets the example of preferring *expediency* to the weightier matters of the law.”—*Ibid.*

“‘Property has its duties as well as its rights:’ and I, for one *parson*, shame whom it may, will (by God’s help) leave the rights and property of one parish at least upon some better understanding by the people of it, than for some years past. The Rev. Mr. Duncombe will try by example, as well as by ‘*circulating printed papers with his name attached*,’ to extend among the landlords the practice of the holy commandment, ‘Thou shalt not remove the landmarks set in thine inheritance; but thou shalt do to others, as ye would that others should do to thee.’ I have no merit in pursuing this enterprise. On the contrary, I am the *parson* of the parish, ‘the servant unto all,’ hired and paid for this very purpose; and if I left undone anything in my power to do, to reclaim, defend, and hand down to posterity, parish rights and property, I should be a traitor, amenable to the just rule of eternal judgment. ‘For, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin’ (James iv. 17). But some clergyman will perhaps say, with a ‘*stand-thou-back*’ countenance, ‘the Bishop is with the government, and against the parochial system.’ What is that to any honest *parson*? If the Duke of Wellington had sold England to Napoleon, would that have excused Captain Gossip (a great Yorkshire New Poor-Lawyer) for not protesting against such perfidy? Mr. Justice Gossip may answer ‘Yes;’ but you, my 2,533 comrades, will agree No.”—“*Justice and Centralization; or, the*

*Parson and the Constitution," by the Rev. Edward Duncombe, 1840.*

"The next thing I have engaged in, and which I apprehend is one of the many causes of your bringing me before you to-day, is the part I have taken in every attempt to defeat that worst of all acts ever passed in England, the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. (Loud cheers.) When that Act was passing through the House, I gave my feeble opposition to it, with Mr. Cobbett and Mr. O'Connor, who was then in the House, and some others; but it was lamentable to see in a House of 658 members, only twenty voting against the principle of the measure. (Cheers.) That was reform! (Hear.) We have a Reform Bill, it is true, but we have not got what we want, nor what you want, Gentlemen. (Cheers.) I see a tyranny of the worst description at a distance. It has already set in; the wedges are inserted; and if the people do not rouse themselves, they will be placed under a stronger tyranny than the Poles or the Russians are. It has been announced by a Secretary of State, that the time has arrived when we may alter the laws and the institutions of England! Now, I am so far a Conservative, that I do not wish to see our old English institutions destroyed; I am so far a Conservative, that I will exert myself to the utmost of my power, and I will call upon the people to back me, and those who are opposed to the same thing, to prevent those institutions which the Radicals never asked to be destroyed, but which it is now proved that the Whigs wish to destroy. I will exert myself, I say, to prevent the loss of those valuable institutions which have made England what she is, the greatest nation that has ever been upon the face of the earth. (Cheers.) They first commenced with the destruction of the poor man's charter, and they passed a law more unjust in principle, than any that was ever passed since the Poor-Law was first enacted. (Cheers.) The old Poor-Law recognised the right of every man in times of distress, and in circumstances of poverty over which he had no control, established the clear, indefeasible right of every such man, to a maintenance out of the property of the country. (Cheers.) But what does the New Poor-Law? It throws every man upon his own resources! (Hear, hear.) It says to the working man, 'Let your wages be never so small—let your employment be never so laborious—you may work eighteen or twenty hours a-day,

you may exhaust your strength in procuring food and clothing, but if you fail in doing that, though you have no command over wages, yet you shall have no relief in this country out of a prison.'—(Hear, hear.) That is the New Poor-Law, which is destroying one of the best institutions which has made England and Wales superior to any other country upon the face of the globe. I would ask any man to account to me for the difference between the people of Ireland and the people of England, if it is not to be found in the Poor-Law. I would ask any man to account to me for the difference between England and Scotland, if that difference is not to be found in the Poor-Law—(Hear, hear.) My late excellent colleague took great pains to ascertain the mode of living in Scotland, and he described it in a manner I have never forgotten.—'The labouring people in Scotland' he said, 'live in hovels and feed upon broths!'—(Hear, hear.) In Ireland they live upon the worst sort of potatoes. In England the labouring people, who feel the taxes operating so heavily upon them, did, even up to the time of the passing of the New Poor-Law Act, contrive to get a little meat and bread, they did continue to get a few potatoes, and some of them a little beer, to feed them upon, and that is the difference between England and Ireland, that is the difference between England and Scotland, and it is the New Poor-Law, which was carried by the Whigs, and which they are determined to support, that will reduce the working people of Lancashire as low as they are now in Ireland. Besides, is it not most unjust to the working man to say, that he shall have no relief when he has done all that nature has given him the means of doing to maintain himself? (Hear.) The land was not given to the lords, and the baronets, and the 'squires, unconditionally. (Hear.) The land was given to the whole of God's creatures, and they have all a right to the produce of it in some way or other. (Hear.) Their right cannot be disputed; and it is a wise provision which requires, in case of failure of work, of wages, and of the means of obtaining a sufficiency of food, a sufficiency of clothing, and a comfortable shelter; for the land was only to be given up on condition that these things should be supplied. (Hear.) And on that, Gentlemen, we must insist."—*Mr. Fielden's Speech, at the Manchester Fielden Dinner, June 4, 1838.*



Poor Rates.	Government Taxes.
Reign of James II.—£160,000 .....	£1,300,000
1776—£1,490,000 .....	£8,000,000
1789—£2,250,000 .....	£16,000,000
1833—£6,700,000 .....	£52,000,000

“Ought not the insolent calumniators of the industrious classes of England to blush at the sight of this? Ought not these impudent and unfeeling men to think a little of the consequences of their thus wantonly calumniating this laborious people, and calling them idle, sturdy vagabonds? Must it not be evident to every one, that the increase of poor-rates has arisen from the increase of rents and the increase of taxes, and not at all from any defect in the poor-laws, nor from any defect in their administration by overseers and magistrates? How comes it that they never produced all this mass of evil attributed to them in the course of 200 years?” — *Cobbett's “Legacy to Labourers.”*

“Mr. Oastler then came forward, and was received with immense applause. He said, he rejoiced once more to have the honour of appearing in the metropolis of his native land. Five years ago he had been privileged to raise his voice in favour of the poor oppressed factory children of the north, at a meeting in the city of London, at which the then Lord Mayor presided. (Hear, hear.) But circumstances were very different with him now. On that occasion he had come to intercede on behalf of the weak, the oppressed, and the defenceless, but now he appeared before them as the advocate of the rich and the great, advocating their cause, even against themselves, and endeavouring to make them see, if that were possible, that the pit they had dug for the poor was one into which they themselves would fall. (Loud cheers.) He had ceased to talk about the New Poor-Law as a question with the poor; that question was now settled; the poor neither would nor could submit to it. He, therefore, wished to raise his voice this day on behalf of the rights of property, being fully convinced, that if the New Poor-Law continued to be the law of the land, the title to property would and must be extinguished, and the order of society would be entirely destroyed. (Cheers.) The first occasion on which his attention had been drawn to the Poor-Law Amendment-Act was during its progress through the House of Lords, when a copy of the original Bill was sent to him by his respected friend, the Hon. William Duncombe, member

for the North Riding of Yorkshire. Then he consulted nobody—he asked no question of any man of any party, but he instantly sat down to examine the Bill, and he saw at that moment, what subsequent proofs had only served to establish in his mind, that were the Bill to be passed into law, the institutions of the country must inevitably be subverted, and anarchy, confusion, bloodshed, and destruction, must be the consequence of the measure. (Hear, hear.) What did he do? He did not know what his friends here might be, but being himself a retired country worker—for he was not a country gentleman, he was a very hard worker—and having very settled habits, and being besides a very strong Tory, in fact most amazingly so, he did not think of agitating the country about it at first. He had agitated the country some years on behalf of the poor factory children, and he did not at first look at the Poor-Law as a question that concerned the poor. What then did he do? He started directly for London at his own expense, and without any bidding (hear, hear); he did not call on the working people here to support him, though he saw a good many of them too; his object was to see the nobility; and the first person he called upon was the Duke of Wellington. He had an interview with his Grace, and with several other noble lords; he apprised them of their danger, and he told them, distinctly and unequivocally, that if the Bill became law their parchments and coronets were not worth one year's purchase, and he said so still. It was because he loved the institutions of the country, that he felt imperatively bound to be instant, both in season and out of season; and that he would consent to join with men of all parties, in politics and religion, in doing what appeared to him right; he would go all lengths with them in such a cause, and when they could go no further, they could shake hands and be friends. Now, finding that the ears of the aristocracy of England were stopped, that their eyes were blind to the danger into which they were bringing their order, their titles, dignities, and properties—finding it impossible to arouse the higher classes to a sense of their situation, and that they might save themselves from the ruin which yawned for them, he went back to the people, and he had been trying for some years to rally the people of England under the old constitutional principle of fair play for every man and for every party. (Hear,

hear.)"—*Freemasons' Tavern, Feb. 19, 1838.*

"If I could engage to work out this New Poor-Law, or take any part in its administration, either direct or indirect, I would go the whole length in obeying the Commissioners, because the sooner this is done, the sooner will the effects of the law become manifest to the people; and as soon as those effects do become manifest to the people, the sooner we shall have the law repealed or a revolution. (Hear.) Of that I have no doubt; and therefore I say, that all who wish to prevent revolution, all who wish to prevent anarchy and confusion, all who wish to preserve property and life, ought by all means to exert themselves to upset this New Poor-Law—(loud cheers)—if it be deserving of the name of law, but I am not much disposed to recognize it as law. (Hear, hear.) I am inclined to think that if we are to take the authorities of former days (and that is quite as good as any we have at present), they would tell us it is no law at all; and that it is not the law of the land I am quite certain. (Hear, hear.) For if anything were wanting to tell me it was not the law of the land, I would ask what was said by Sir James Scarlett when opposing it? He said, 'It is a tyranny which the people will not submit to.' (Cheers.) What said Judge Best, Lord Wynford? He said, 'This law is contrary to the maxims and to every principle of the laws of this country.' (Continued cheers.) And what said Lord Lyndhurst, in the debate upon the Poor-Law Bill for Ireland? He said, 'The Poor-Law Amendment-Act is only an experiment,' an experiment observe, 'which you dare not carry into execution in some parts of the country.' (Renewed cheers.) Why this cannot be law if it be an experiment; and upon whom is the experiment made? That is a question which you would do well to consider. The experiment is made upon the poor—upon those who are ready to perish—(hear, hear)—and upon this account I would recommend and suggest, that all men who wish well either to life or property, to the security of the cottage, the mansion, and the palace, to unite, and by every means in their power, endeavour to obtain the repeal of this abominable law."—*Mr. Fielden's Speech at the Manchester Fielden Dinner, June 4, 1838.*

"I do not approve of the principal part of the measure proposed by the Poor-Law Commissioners in the first instance, and

adopted and subsequently brought forward by Ministers; viz., an extension of work-houses for the reception of the poor, where employment is to be provided for them; and rigorously prohibiting relief 'out of the house.' Modifications of the report have certainly been proposed; but the grand principle remains, and is brought into exclusive operation, of public instead of parochial workhouses being established all over the kingdom—of centre Boards, consisting of strangers, for their government—of local and central Commissioners—and, at last, of the Secretary of State for the Home Department (perhaps some new secretaryship, with some new Home-office) for the direction and government of the whole. A new power is to be created in the country. This is the general outline of the plan, respecting which I must remark, that it is an inversion of what has been esteemed the natural and regular order of all good government, which rises from the management of families, parishes, towns, counties, to the general administration of the State. Here the State starts first, in the character of a Central Board, and diffuses its regulations below. This is what the French call centralization. Everything springs from Government in France; the people do nothing for themselves; roads, bridges, canals, are all the work of the State. I do not know that this is a happy example to copy.....Mr. Pitt has said, that 'the law which prohibits giving relief where any visible property remains, should be abolished—that degrading condition should be withdrawn—no temporary occurrence should force a British subject to part with the last shilling of his little capital, and compel him to descend to a state of wretchedness, from which he could never recover, merely that he might be entitled to a casual supply.'.....I do not think your present condition will be improved by a totally new system, engendered in despair, and which we are called upon to adopt in the heat of the moment. I should desire that we might cast our eyes on ancient usages, and endeavour to return to them, rather than introduce a plan which might draw the country yet further from its ancient habits, and ultimately tend to change the very nature of Englishmen, who have been accustomed to look to each other for support, and not to call for the cold and hard hand of Government in all occurrences of life, and change of fortune.....If no other individual, either in or out of the House, shall



oppose this measure, I shall at least have done what my conscience tells me to be right, in thus holding up my hand, and exerting my feeble voice against it. . . . . Here is a scheme theoretic merely, the invention and discovery of theorists, of speculators knowing but little of the habits and usages of Englishmen; and those of whom they do know the usage, living chiefly in London and other great towns. The principle of the English constitution was also heretofore self-government; every one had a certain understanding of the law, because every one participated, in a greater or less degree, in its administration in their several districts, as overseers, magistrates, jurymen. This wholesome principle is set aside; and the most important body of laws in the kingdom—those on which the comfort of the lower orders, and of course the tranquillity and stability of all orders, depend—are to be administered by Government officers, by strangers among those who are to be the subjects, or rather the victims of them. The very appearance of parishes would thus be changed, and the respectable inhabitants have little to do with their own concerns. Such a change, I will venture to say, never took place in this country since the time of the conquest. . . . . You, Gentlemen, honoured me by your choice, and sent me into Parliament as your representative, in order to support the principles of Reform, and to that extent the Ministry by which the great measure of Parliamentary Reform has been effected. You may naturally suppose that I could continue to give them my support. They have now introduced a measure of vast importance—I should think of even greater importance than Parliamentary Reform itself, affecting every parish, hamlet, I may say, cottage, in the kingdom. I think portions of the measure pregnant with evil; I think it a change of the British constitution itself; I think it calculated to produce a revolution in the manners and habits of the British people; providing inadequately for its ostensible objects, and productive of consequences which cannot be looked at without dismay.”—*Mr. Walter's Retiring Address to his Berkshire Constituents*, April 26, 1834.

“As it is an implied condition in the delegation of the powers of Government and legislation, that they shall be exercised for the good of the community, it follows as an undeniable consequence, that whenever they are exercised to the prejudice of

natural justice, there cannot be any obligation, either moral or religious, to obey them; and, therefore, they are invalid.”—*Williams's Commentary on Blackstone*.

“Natural unalienable rights cannot be surrendered, since man is an accountable being. Nor is it possible to annul the obligations of the law of nature. It must, therefore, be conceded, that the great law of nature, self-preservation, authorizes the people of every state to recall that power which is employed for counteracting the ends for which it was conferred, and justifies their attempts to wrest their delegated power from hands which employ it for purposes different from those for which they were invested with it.”—*Williams's Commentary on Blackstone*.

“Treason is a betraying of the State, and the first and highest treason is that which is committed against the Constitution.”—*Lord Chancellor Somers*.

“When Colonel Axtell was tried in the reign of Charles II. for having mounted guard in the High Commission Court, which condemned Charles I., he pleaded, that he only acted as a military man, under the Parliament, which was then obeyed by the three Kingdoms; and said, ‘I am to serve and obey all my superior officers—that is my commission—if I do not, I die by the law of war.’ He was answered by the Court, ‘You have to obey them in their just commands; all unjust commands are invalid.’ And he suffered death.”—*Cartwright*.

“Statutes cannot exist against reason or the law Divine, for these two laws cannot abate or turn aside.”—*Doctor and Student*. Ed. 1688.

“To say that if Parliament will positively enact a thing to be done which is unreasonable, there is no authority to control it, for that which has been done by Parliament can only be undone by Parliament, is really childish, and implies an absolute ignorance of the natural rights of mankind. For surely the staunchest advocate for arbitrary power will not deny, that since Government is constituted for the good of the community, should either the legislature or executive branches violate the powers, either expressed or implied, with which they have been entrusted for the management and direction of public affairs, such violation amounts to a forfeiture of the terms of the compact between the governors and governed, and consequently authorizes a resumption by the latter of the delegated authority.”—*Williams's Commentary on Blackstone*.

"Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!"—WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS.

"———But what can Cato do  
Against a world, a base, degenerate world?"—CATO.

The other day, in the village of M——, which is situated somewhere between Hereford (*the city of the snobs*) and the island of St. Helena, the parishioners thereof, and their rector had a little friendly "*rixa*" on the score of his (the rector's) dismissing from his service a curate, whose clergy sayings, they (the parishioners of M——), delighted to hear and honour. The war of words and the strife of thoughts raged high and ran low. The *teterrima causa belli*, the curate, however, was forced to resign by his superior practitioner, and all the little children in the village of M——, on the day of his departure, presented him, as a testimonial of the esteem they held him in, lapsful of *pieces of plate*, bits of china, ware, delf, &c. This was as it should be, and exceedingly proper and appropriate on the part of the juveniles. But their fathers and mothers were of a higher mood—much more devotional, and pre-eminently Christian in their display of feeling on the occasion. They, on the day of their fancy man's leaving them, hoisted a black flag on the church tower, making the same looking as if it were the Flying Dutchman's privateering schooner. They likewise inscribed on the door of the sacred edifice, "*This church is to be let, and the clerk of the parish to be raffled for!*" But what has this to do with the New Poor-Law? Something. Let the New Poor-Law—that enactment of cattle-breeder Spencer, and Baron Brougham of the brandy-flask, of the little "Finality" creature, whose blood runs cold and white, and of Magdalene Melbourne, whose delight it is to be with married ladies with the *blinds down*—let this enactment, in spite of the myriad murders, seductions, suicides, which its operation has occasioned—in spite of the innumerable hands and voices which have been lifted up against its horrid working—let it continue a little longer to be the law of the land, and every church steeple and minster tower in the kingdom will be decorated with a dark flag, and every house of prayer will be advertised *to be let, and its clerk, ay, and its clergy too, to be raffled for!* The Malthusian malice—its decree of deadly

hatred to God, and illwill to man—has already stabbed Religion with daggers steeped in poison, and if the fell thing should be allowed to fester in the land much longer, and aim its lethiferous blows at benevolence and virtue, all the churches will topple down, deserted, and Religion, desperately wounded, will flee from Britain, and seek refuge in some other clime!

These are no words of idleness. Religion, or the New Poor-Law, *must leave England*—one or the other, and that ere long. Somerset-house and the cathedrals cannot exist for any length of time contemporary. The Commissioners or the Clergy must be abolished—but which? that is the question, and events will show. This is the true state of the case—this is the crisis—this is the most important consideration, at present, and all else is but mere unnatural noise—but faction's farce—much cry and little wool, which no *true patriot* ought to regard. Of what account are, or ought to be, discussions of Corn-Law, Slave-Sugar, Church-Rates, Hill-Coolies, and suchlike, when Benevolence lies bleeding, Charity cursed, Religion routed, and God's own poor massacred by this barbarous Act? What! but impious trifling, and miserable, merciless mockery. When such dreadful results are taking place, Who's for the rescue? should be the cry. Those who say, down with the New Poor-Law, are my friends—friends to their country and their Maker. Those, the expediency-mongers, who whine, do let it be a *little longer*, ought never to be permitted to shake the hand, or taste the cup, of an honest man—they never shall have shake or taste of mine. As for the barefaced favourers of the brutal decree, I denounce them as enemies to God, their country, and their kind; and I hope to see the time when it shall be decided between them and the people, whether poverty is to be punished more painfully than crime, and their children's bread to be thrown to dogs—dogs of Commissioners.

Oh! but for *one word*—one unanimous word of encouragement, from the people of England, and I am up—up for God's



poor and helpless, and ready, like Peter the hermit of old, but in a much *nobler* cause, to traverse the length and breadth of the land, to cheer to the onslaught, and preach a crusado against our island's curse and shame, the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act. — *G. R. Wythen Baxter*, May 14, 1841.

"What, we ask, is Chartism,—what but an armed poverty!" — *Morning Herald*, Feb., 1841.

"It was promised, that the New Poor-Law would increase the wages of the labourers, whereas, even with the God-send of the railroads, it is notorious, that wages have fallen. The New Poor-Law was to have elevated the moral character of the labourers;—the calendars of crime testify the reverse. Property was to have been secured by the enforcement of the New Poor-Law; but the establishment of a rural police, 'to sweep the country'—'to clear the county more rapidly'—'to visit those parts of the county that are most infested, for the purpose of breaking up the dens of thieves which infest certain parts of the county,' demonstrates, that property is much less secure now, than it was before the introduction of the New Poor-Law. I beg, Sir, that you will bear in mind, that the expressions inserted above (in inverted commas) are not inventions of my own—they were publicly used by a clerical magistrate of your own county (Norfolk) when he was giving his reasons for the *augmentation* of the Norfolk Rural Police. You are aware, that about a year ago, *i. e.* as soon as you had fairly established the New Poor-Law in Norfolk, the result was just what I told you it would be. The labourers could not, because they are Englishmen, submit to its cruelties and tyranny. They grumbled—became surly and revengeful. Finding that their rights were *stolen* from them, (for it is *theft* to deprive them of their relief, and they know it,) they began to imagine that there could be no harm in their invading the rights of others. This state of things caused the owners of property to be very uneasy; they had to 'watch and ward' for a while; at length they tired of guarding themselves, and resolved to hire a strong body of rural police, at many thousands of pounds expense, to prow about day and night, and *catch* thieves: but it now seems that they only *hatched* them—"the more police, the more thieves,"—is now, as you know, a common saying in your county. Still,

so blind is injustice, that you have agreed to tax yourselves more heavily, and have resolved to hire a larger body of police! —Will you hear me, Sir?—It will still be—"the more police, the more thieves." So that, you perceive, the more you enforce the New Poor-Law, and increase your police, just so much more insecure does your property become! But, instead of restoring the labourers their rights, you madly hope for security in a stronger body of police. Thus are you whipping yourselves with your own cords. Again, domestic peace and loyalty were promised, as the sure consequences of the enforcement of the New Poor-Law. Now, Sir, what is the fact? In the seventh year of trial, it is acknowledged, even by the organ of the Government, that 'the working classes are now, in fact, at war with all the superior classes. They are alienated and hostile—heart and soul.' Still, I know that there are those in very high places, who have made up their minds to re-enact 'the execrable and atrocious New Poor-Law;' and who still, in defiance of every fact, declare that 'the New Poor-Law has worked well.' I know all this, Sir, and that they expect their rank and office will screen them from the shame which most certainly awaits all liars! But, Sir, knowing as I do, and having demonstrated, by undeniable facts, *that the New Poor-Law is a failure*—if I wished those men harm—I should desire that they might succeed in thus deluding Parliament. They know that facts are all against them; but they stupidly cling to error, and resolve to build up injustice by fraud and force, rather than acknowledge, that they have made a mistake! They seem resolved to jeopardize all, rather than bend to truth! I know all this, Sir; and if I were as rich as you are, I should be very, very uneasy!" — *Oastler's "Fleet Papers,"* (addressed to Mr. Thomas Thornhill,) No. 6.

"In cases of unconstitutional oppression on the part of the sovereign power, mankind will not be reasoned out of the feelings of humanity, nor will sacrifice their liberty by a scrupulous adherence to those political maxims, which were originally established to prevent it." — *Blackstone*.

"Obedience is due to the laws when founded on the constitution, but when they are subversive of the constitution, then disobedience instead of obedience is due, and resistance becomes the law of the land." — *Earl of Abingdon*.

“THE GILBERT UNIONS.

“The following circular, says the *Times* of March 18, 1841, has been forwarded to Members of the House of Commons. In all the Gilbert Unions, we are informed, in which a difference of opinion originally existed as to the expediency of dissolving them, the strongest unanimity at present prevails in favour of their preservation, the Guardians having now had six years’ experience of the working of the new system in other parishes:—

“We, the undersigned visitors and chairmen of Unions of parishes incorporated under Gilbert’s Act, having observed with the greatest regret the persevering endeavours of Lord John Russell to abolish by force the said Unions, a proceeding which we consider unjustifiably harsh, take the liberty of submitting to you the following observations on the subject.

“The Gilbert Unions have been established generally nearly 50 years, under the express sanction of the Legislature, and having now had the benefit of six years’ comparison with the neighbouring Unions under the new law, the rate-payers must certainly be qualified to judge as to whether the dissolution of their said Unions would be beneficial or otherwise, and after an uninterrupted exercise of their privilege for so long a time (being longer than is now required by law as a possessionable title to freehold estates), we submit that they are entitled, in common justice, to exercise their own discretion in the matter.

“From our individual experience of the working of the Gilbert Unions we consider them to combine, in a great degree, the two essential requisites of economy to the rate-payers and humanity to the poor; and though, as regards the former, the Commissioners boast of their savings, such savings we believe, if correctly stated, to be principally owing to the greater prosperity of the country during the last as compared with the previous five years, and to the immense increase of labour caused by the construction of railroads.

“The total number of parishes in England and Wales, actually incorporated into Unions by the Poor-Law Commissioners, is 13,670, the number not subject to their control 799, of which only 288 are under Gilbert’s Act, and the remain-

der principally under local acts: the assertion of the Commissioners, therefore, that the existence of the Gilbert Unions has interfered with their general arrangements must be without foundation.

“The late announcement by Lord John Russell of his intention to respect the integrity of the local Unions, while no relaxation is to be made in the treatment of the Gilbert Unions, would be difficult to account for, did we not reflect, that the former being principally in towns whose inhabitants are enabled to hold large meetings and use other means of popular intimidation, his lordship yields to the pressure; but in the case of the Gilbert Unions, situate in agricultural districts, whose inhabitants are quiet and dispersed, and who are consequently unable to make their voice heard in the Legislature, their interests and feelings are wholly disregarded by his Lordship, though the justice of their claims must be at least as evident as those of the local incorporations.

“If the Commissioners were willing for their system to have a fair trial (the dread of which we believe to be a principal reason for their anxiety to get us under their control), no better test could be devised, than their allowing the present comparatively small number of parishes under Gilbert and local acts to remain in being with their new Unions. Both systems would be equally affected by the general prosperity or reverses of the country, and if the new law have the efficacy its supporters contend for, the rate-payers under the old systems would not be slow to perceive its advantages, and the Commissioners might safely leave to their self-interest the enrolling themselves under it; but, on the contrary, we believe that in districts where the new law has been long in operation, crime has fearfully increased, and that by the consequent increased expenditure for police and county rates, the enormous establishment charges of the new Unions, and the additional highway rates (to which many expenses formerly included in the poor-rate are now generally added), no actual benefit to the rate-payers accrues, and the poor are infinitely worse off, thereby weaning the poor man from his respect to the institutions of his country, which he considers give him no protection, and engendering a feeling which in times of future commercial or agricultural distress may have the most direful effects.



"We, therefore, on the part of the Guardians and rate-payers, and more emphatically on the part of the poor of our several Unions, respectfully solicit the honour and benefit of your exertions in our behalf, when the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill goes into committee, to strike out that part of the 8th clause which empowers such dissolution by the Poor-Law Commissioners of our Unions without our consent; that the rate-payers may not be deprived of the right, which they trust they have exercised beneficially for half-a-century, of superintending the disbursement of their own funds, and of themselves administering to their poor neighbours the assistance which their local knowledge of the respective cases convinces them is imperatively required; and that the poor may not be handed over to the mercies of men who violate every domestic tie, and who make no distinction between the visitations of Providence, and the results of improvidence and debauchery.

"We have the honour to be, &c."

"NO OUT-DOOR RELIEF—RESIGNATION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BASFORD UNION.

"Some time ago the Poor-Law Commissioners issued an imperative mandate to the Unions in country districts, prohibiting the Guardians from granting any out-door relief to any persons, however aged, or under whatever circumstances. This cruel order is now in force in the Basford, Bingham, Mansfield, Southwell, Worksop, Newark, and Retford Unions, but has not yet been issued to the Unions in large towns, such as Nottingham, &c. The following letter from Henry Smith, Esq., High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, and Chairman of the Basford Union since its formation, speaks volumes against the Bill now before Parliament for extending and continuing the power of the Commissioners for ten years:—

"Wilford, near Nottingham,

"February 11, 1841.

"SIR,—On Tuesday last, a printed document of some length was read to the Board from the Commissioners, explaining their views as to the *inepdiency of giving out relief to non-resident paupers* through the medium, and under the supervision, of local Boards of Guardians.

"You are aware that the decision the Commissioners have formed upon this subject is directly at variance with the view I have been led to entertain, after nearly five years' experience as a Guardian. And you are sensible, too, of the pain, as well as dismay it has given me, to find that surrounding Unions are carrying out this regulation.

"It is not fit or becoming in me to maintain my own view in the face of such high authority as the document referred to; and feeling, as I do, that I cannot, under the existing law of settlement, conscientiously act upon a prohibition which, I conceive, will inflict so much needless suffering upon a large class of poor persons in circumstances of old age, widowhood, and temporary sickness, especially in an extensive Union like Basford, I have no alternative but to retire at once from the administration of the Poor-Law.

"In resigning, therefore, the office of Chairman, I beg you will convey to the Guardians my sense of their uniform kindness, and of the able assistance they have afforded me in the discharge of the arduous duties which have devolved upon me: and I wish also to express to yourself, and to the several officers of the Union, my best thanks for your obliging attention to me on all occasions.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"HENRY SMITH.

"MR. WILLIAM ASHTON.

"Clerk to the Basford Board of Guardians."

"We need not make one word of comment. Mr. Smith characterizes the order as inflicting 'needless suffering upon a large class of poor persons, in circumstances of old age, widowhood, and temporary sickness.' He very properly refuses to be made the instrument of so much torture to the aged and deserving poor; and he flings the thankless office in the faces of the Commissioners, that they may find some more iron-hearted Guardian, some more pliant tool, to carry into effect their cruel mandates. Such will be the consequence in many Unions, if such regulations as these are enforced; the humane, the benevolent, the Christian man, will revolt from being made the instrument of such tyranny, and the poor will be left to the tender mercies of paid officers, and Guardians who are not very scrupulous what means they employ, however oppressive to the poor, so that they may but lower the rate. Now, however, is the time for every feeling, Christian man, every one who has pity upon the poor, to exert himself to the utmost, to get up petitions against the Poor-Law Extension-Bill now before Parliament, and thus, as far as in him lies, to prevent the present Poor-Law Commissioners from being again entrusted with a power which they have so cruelly abused.

"From personal knowledge, we can give a most cordial testimony to the high moral dignity and genuine philanthropy of Mr. Smith's character; we know that party bias or private interest could not possibly influence him in the noble decision to which he has come; he is distinguished in his own neighbourhood as a

liberal and pious Dissenter; and we, therefore, feel confident that his example will have great weight with every man whose heart quails not in the advocacy of justice and the rights of humanity.”—*Sheffield Iris*, Feb. 23, 1841.

“In a report of the trial of Mr. Stephens, which appears to be the fullest that we have seen, Mr. Justice Patteson is represented as having used the following language:—

“I am very sorry to have to pass sentence upon any person of your talent and ability, and of your education, for an offence of this sort; and if it be indeed true that you have hitherto advocated peaceable doctrines, and have endeavoured to inculcate upon the persons whom you have attended in your ministerial capacity the notion of submitting to the constituted authorities of the country, and have only upon other occasions advocated a resistance to the Poor-Law Amendment-Act and nothing else, then indeed, although you would have been committed, by advocating such resistance, to a very great extent, yet their might be some sort of reason for saying that you had made a mistaken notion,—that you had fallen into error in supporting that, because that law, in your judgment, was contrary to what you think you are bound to obey in the law of God, therefore you were not bound to obey that law. But, on the present occasion, I can see no reason whatever for supposing for a moment that that meeting had anything whatever to do with the Poor-Law Amendment-Act.

“If this language has been used by any judge, it is a ‘heavy blow and great discouragement’ of the New Poor-Law, and another indication of the fate that awaits it.”—*Champion*, Sept. 8, 1839.

“The base of society, the working classes, is in ruin, and distress has now entered the middle rank—how the superstructure will fare, time will show. ‘With the same measure ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you,’ seems to be in the course of fulfilment. The word of God is true, and therefore the New Poor-Law must be wrong. The poisoned chalice which has been given to the poor to drink, must be brought to the lips of the rich, unless they ‘repent, and do works meet for repentance.’”—*Extract*

*of a Letter to the Author from Mr. Thomas Lindop, Hanley, Staffordshire*, March 30, 1841.

“It is probable, that a more determined and inflexible enemy of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act does not exist than myself. Detestable alike in theory and practice, it is a most mischievous error in legislation of which the ultimate consequences cannot fail to be disastrous in the extreme to this misgoverned country.”—*Extract of a Letter to the Author from W. J. Utten Browne, Esq., the Lodge, Bramerton, near Norwich*, December 14, 1840.

“Well, well; God’s curse will, sooner or later, fall upon the designers and the carriers into effect of so hellish a statute. Let us hope the time is drawing nigh when the power of these wicked ones shall draw to a close. Much has been done in this neighbourhood; but, I am sorry to have to say, seemingly so far to little purpose, in trying to stem that accursed torrent of *Reform* which has given us New Police, New Poor-Law and put into power a Mammon-worshipping body, and soul-selling band of Cotton Lords. That their end may be speedy, and that the evils they assisted to create may cease with them, is the fervent prayer of your well-wisher.”—*Extract of a Letter to the Author from Mr. W. Willis (of Manchester)*, Sept. 14, 1840.

“Though in a constituted commonwealth, standing upon its own basis, and acting according to its own nature, that is, acting for the preservation of the community, there can be but one supreme power, to which all the rest are, and must be, subordinate; yet the Legislative, being only a fiduciary power to act for certain ends, there remains still in the people a supreme power to remove or alter the Legislature, when they find the Legislature act contrary to the trust reposed in them. For all power given with trust for attaining an end, being limited by that end, whenever the end is manifestly neglected or opposed, the trust must necessarily be forfeited, and the power devolve into the hands of those who gave it, who may place it anew, where they may think best for their safety and security. And thus the community perpetually retains a supreme power of saving themselves from the attempts and designs of any body, even of their legislators, whenever they shall be so foolish or so wicked as to lay and carry on designs against the liberties and properties of the subjects.”—*Locke*.



"Was anything more severe ever contemplated by a set of legislators in this or any other country? Look at its tendency; it tends first of all directly to destroy that great and salutary principle of Englishmen, the very foundation of our boasted liberty and freedom—self-government. We have been wont ourselves to manage the affairs of our own localities, and this habit is congenial to our disposition and our interest; but now, instead of local management, all the power is to be thrown immediately into the hands of three Commissioners, who know nothing of us or of our affairs; and by this means self-government will be surrendered and abolished. (Cries of 'Turn them out.') What can be more cruel than to tear away from their families merely because they are poor, the disabled, and the infirm, and the helpless? How many instances do I know of a poor widowed mother, half maintained by the industrious exertions of her daughter; of an aged father, whose son or grandson is willing and anxious to assist in his support out of his slender earnings! all his feelings are planted where they ought to be, among his own family, and for a paltry shilling or sixpence a week he might remain and end his days amidst the affectionate attention of his friends; but, no; the Commissioners decide that he shall go to the central workhouse; every bond of affection is ruthlessly rent asunder, and he is sent off and immured in this gloomy abode until the friendly hand of death relieves him. I can conceive nothing more cruel—nothing more affecting than this. And then the children of the poor are to be subjected to similar inhumanity; they are all to be dispatched to the central house for education, as it is alleged. But it will be asked, 'How can there be anything inhuman in taking the children from parents who cannot provide for them, and sending them to suitable buildings, where they will be well fed and educated?' Gentlemen, I will tell you wherein the humanity consists; I well understand the meaning of the word, and I employ it in its proper sense; I call that inhuman which is contrary to those feelings and dictates of humanity which God Almighty has implanted in the bosoms of us all. Perhaps I shall better explain myself by quoting an instance in illustration of my meaning. I recollect, some time ago, a poor man of this town, whose name was Chapple, died, and left behind him a numerous family of

little children; his widow did not long survive him, and at her death the children were left in a state of pitiable distress; of course nothing remained to them but to go into the Union-house; they had an aunt who was particularly attached to the youngest child, a little girl, three years old, and she came to me and expressed her very great anxiety to keep the child with her; she would do anything she could to retain her out of the house, and besought my interference to procure for her from the Board a trifling allowance towards her maintenance, that she might take charge of her altogether. The child went into the house with the rest of the family until the Board met, but she did nothing but cry the day or two she remained. On the Friday the aunt attended, and I introduced the question to the Board, and proposed a small pittance to the woman for the child's support out of the house. I was met with the question, 'But why would you keep her out of the house? Will she not be better clothed, better fed, and better taught here than she can be by her aunt, who is too poor to take charge of her without parochial help?' But I was not to be imposed upon by a species of plausible reasoning which I had been too much accustomed to; I pressed the subject, and, by strange good fortune, I carried my point, but it depended upon a single vote whether the child should be kept in the house or not. It so happened that on leaving the Board I followed this poor woman, but without her knowledge: she was on her way home with the child, whom she pressed closely to her bosom with the warmest affection and tenderness. I was interested by the appearance of mutual joy which their countenances and gestures indicated, and I kept close to them, and heard the aunt saying, 'O! my dear child, now I have got you again; I shall never, never part with you more—no, not if I starve myself for it!' And with expressions like these she gave utterance to her pleasure, while the child's eyes sparkled with delight at her restoration to her aunt's embraces. Gentlemen, that is what I call education; this woman was at that moment implanting in the child's bosom feelings and affections which could never have found entrance there by other means; that is the sort of education which God, in his infinite wisdom and mercy, has provided for us in our childhood; feelings were then planted and fostered in the child's mind which

will grow into maturity, and constitute one of the greatest charms and felicities of life. And will you place in competition with this the simple teaching of A, B, C, in the cold system of a Union workhouse? (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I am very sorry so long to trespass upon you. (Cries of 'Go on.') When I saw that bill I was astonished at its contents; but my eyes were opened by the perusal of the speech of Lord John Russell upon it. Of his lordship personally, I say that I believe him to be a kind-hearted and humane man, but he is misled by the crude theories which inexperienced persons have put forth. He says that the great curse which has always accompanied the management of the poor in this country is, that three things which have no natural relation to each other have been strangely combined, viz., the pecuniary relief of the poor, private charity, and the provision of labour for the unemployed; the system of poor-laws had joined these three things, which were in fact, distinct and separate. With regard to the first, his lordship said, that the poor had no claim to anything more than bare relief; that the Board of Guardians had no right whatever to inquire whether the applicant was deserving or undeserving, whether he was good or bad; all the Board had to inquire was, whether he was starving or not, everything beyond the point of the prevention of starvation must be left to be supplied by private charity. I think highly of private charity; and I wish to God that Christian charity was so well known amongst us as to lead to the result which his lordship contemplates. But upon what principle he can ground his expectation of the sufficiency of the spontaneous charity of the people to meet the exigencies of our multiplied and multiplying poor, I am at a loss to imagine. Does the condition of the Irish poor warrant the hope that private bounty shall be so abundant? What, then, are the reports of their perishing condition, which continually reach us? Or does the state of the poor of Scotland give greater countenance to the expectation? Look at the reports of the numbers starved and starving; and whence happens it that the proportion of deaths in Scotland is enormously greater than in this country? No; the principle of charity must be much more extensively fostered among us before it can be adequate to the tax which his lordship would impose upon it.

I remember well, when the Assistant-Commissioner was here to introduce the new system at first; he told us, again and again, that it was a principle of the law that the workhouse would afford a test. I confess that in my simplicity I supposed that he meant it would test the character of the applicant, to prove whether he was willing to labour or not; but no, it is nothing of the kind; the workhouse is intended to test whether the man is starving or not; that is the test, and the only test. I now begin to detect the point to which the system is leading. Let those additional houses be built, and then, depend upon it, an order will be issued by the Commissioners, that no relief of any kind shall be afforded, under any circumstances, out of a workhouse: that is the point which they are driving at; that is the principle which they wish to establish. But will the people of this country permit it? When the great question was agitated, with regard to slavery, do you not recollect, that the constant appeal of the holders of slaves was, 'Why should you interfere with our slaves? they are better fed, better clothed, better provided for in their old age, by far, than your own English poor: why, then, should you interfere with us?' You said, and truly said, in answer, 'Because your slaves are men; because they have the feelings of humanity; because the stamp of a rational being is upon them; we look not at their bodies, but at their minds: don't tell us that they are better clothed and better fed; as long as they are your slaves, they are degraded, and we insist on their emancipation.' But what does the legislature now propose to say to the English labourer, after he has spent a life of hard, but ill-requited toil? Let him apply to the parish, and the language of the Bill is,—'You must leave your home, your family, your friends, and here is a house for you; and that is all you are entitled to: the house or nothing.' Sir, I say that that is slavery—that it is worse than slavery, for it desecrates a land and a people whose very birthright is freedom. My great quarrel with the Act is, that it takes no account whatever of the feelings of our nature—it respects not the ties of kindred—it assumes that so long as our poor have enough to eat and drink, and are clothed, and sheltered in a workhouse, that is all they want—all the country is required to give them. I discard the principle altogether; and I say, if it be carried into effect, it must, and will, prove



the greatest curse that this country was ever visited with; it will rob us of our greatest boast, and of our surest defence. Here the rich and the poor dwell together. We are placed, by the wisdom of an overruling Providence, in different stations and circumstances in life, but we feel that we have a common interest in our country, our father-land; and that our country is alike dear to us all. What was it that animated your soldiers to fight their country's battles, and to defend their country's rights? Not the medals, not the honours, nor the rewards which awaited their victorious arms. No, the great Nelson caught the inspiring principle, when he made his memorable appeal to his forces, 'England expects every man to do his duty.' He knew that every man in his fleet would be aroused by the recollection of the claims which his country had upon him. And the hero of Waterloo, when he was encouraging his soldiers against the appalling front of the French battalions, touched the same string, when he cried out, 'What will they think of us at home?' And it was when they heard of home, that the French troops, although clad in brass and iron, and apparently impregnable, fell under their arms by thousands, and as grass before the hands of the reaper. It was the ties and the claims of their country which inspired them amidst the carnage which surrounded and the perils which threatened them. Gentlemen, let us stick close to the constitution of our country. There is nothing which I dread so much as the degradation of the lower classes: they are the strength, the sinews of the country, and the source of its wealth. What is the value of the estates of all the landed aristocracy of the empire, without the industry and skill of the laborious husbandman? It is not the number of his acres, or the richness of his soil, which constitutes the value of the possessions of the lord, but the sweat, the toil of those who cultivate it. I am most anxious to maintain the attachment of the labouring poor to the soil of their fathers, and I deprecate every measure which tends to shake or diminish it; for,—

'Ill tides the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Whose wealth accumulates and men decay;  
Princes and lords may flourish or may fade;  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.'"

—*The Rev. H. Luxmoore's Speech at the Barnstaple Anti-Poor-Law Meeting, "Times," March 11, 1841.*

"When this Bill was in the House of Commons I supported the immortal Cobbett, and raised my voice against the monopoly of wealth, to advocate the rights and inheritance of the poor and industrious. I voted against every clause of this measure, and therefore I cannot justly be considered as a trafficking politician, or as having any selfish objects to promote. I cannot justly be charged with living upon the wants of others, and coming into the country for the purpose of agitation, having voted for the measure. No. I voted against it, and I am still determined to persevere at every risk and every sacrifice in my opposition. (Cheers.) I oppose this measure, not because I hate the law and the constitution of England, but because I love them. It is because this is a complete pulling down of the constitution—a complete infraction of all our institutions—a complete unsettlement of the only, and the dearest, and the most consoling inheritance of the poor man; and I care not by whose machinations this law may be enforced, the moment it is enforced the constitution of England will not be worth the trifling value of one day's purchase. But, let me ask, had you any voice in the passing of this law? Was it enacted at your instigation, and with your consent? Did you send representatives to Parliament thus to betray you and rob you of your inheritance? No: slave-like, you had not even a voice against it. I should not care whether your power was affirmative or negative, if you even had the power of opposing bad laws; but, alas! you have no power at all. The power which is your native and sacred right has been rudely filched from you; and while you have been tamely confiding to others to do for you your work, like base and cowardly thieves, they have stabbed you in the dark, and robbed you of your all. (Hear, hear, hear.) What is there in you? Are you tainted with crime? Are you half as bad as the aristocracy, to save whose purses this law has been enacted? No: your morality and general demeanour are altogether untarnished, when contrasted with the very men who passed this law. But we are not yet so far sunk into slavery, that the people of this country should tamely submit thus to be led blindfolded, while ninety-nine out of every hundred find this burden so heavily pressing upon them. (Cheers.) We were told, indeed, that this measure would be perfectly satisfactory to all parties! Did you ever know a *bargain* to be good for both sides?

In Ireland we say that this is impossible. The aristocracy framed and passed this Bill to save their own purses, and therefore you have no right to pay rates. (Cheers.) I am glad that the former speakers have entered into the real cause of all your sorrows. If you had had the nomination of these men who made this law, I have little fear in saying that it would never have existed. Those men who have written on the British Constitution say, that every unwilling idler in the land has a right to be supported from the land. And whether shall we be governed by those men whose eminence has entitled them to live in the grateful respect of posterity to the most distant ages, or the three *petty* Kings under Mr. Power, the tramping Poor-Law Commissioner? (Loud cheers.) Well had it been for the Whig Administration if they had confined all their coercion to the land where their scenes of tyranny have now become so familiar that they are little thought of. But we may thank the Whigs for passing this Bill, for had they not passed it we should never have been sufficiently upon our guard. It has done this good for you; it has told you of their tender mercies, and shown you how much they respect your liberties and lives. But look to the position in which landlords and farmers, and shopkeepers and others, have placed themselves by lending their sanction to this unhallowed measure. They have said, in effect, we are unfit to be disposers of our own property—we know not how to administer our own funds, we know not how to provide for our own poor, or to soothe the misfortunes of our own friends, and we therefore place ourselves and our connexions under the care of three heartless Poor-Law Commissioners, at whose dictation our property shall be lavished, and our liberties and domestic enjoyments encroached upon, just as they think proper. (Hear, hear.) You ask to return to the 43d of Elizabeth. I would not have it. While all other sciences are going on to perfection, surely the science of legislation should not for ever stand still (hear); and while luxury is going on apace, and depravity and dissipation are looking for means on which to support themselves, let us also have an extensive improvement in the condition of the working classes of the people. (Tremendous cheers.) I am not satisfied with the 43d of Elizabeth; it perhaps is preferable to the beastly, brutish, and tyrannical law which is now in existence. If they

gave me my choice I should certainly prefer it to the other; but having tried the strength of the people, and seen that they are willing to present their naked breasts to an armed soldiery, rather than submit to the enactments of this law, shall we die for our country and our homes, and yet tamely submit not only to be robbed of every political privilege, but even of the last and unwelcome resource to which the poor man can look as a feeble security against starvation, and a cold shelter against the terrors of despair? (Loud and continued cheering.)" — *Feargus O'Connor, Dewsbury Meeting, Dec. 11, 1837.*

"Mr. Brooke then read his resolution— 'That this meeting views with feelings of serious alarm and indignation the apparent determination of the Poor-Law Commissioners to introduce (by force of arms if necessary) the Poor-Law Amendment-Act into this district, as it is generally repugnant and inimical to the feelings of the people, and calculated to produce misery, crime, anarchy, and confusion.' Such, he said, was the result of the law, and he felt convinced that no other result would follow it. It was strange to him to see a large mass of the wealthy part of the community united together in doing away with the original law of Elizabeth, which gave to every man the right to live on the soil on which he was born; and, what was still more strange, this was not confined to one particular class of politicians, but Whigs, Tories, and Radicals, all join in doing away with the original law. As it regarded the introduction of this law into Dewsbury, he should be sorry if any of the inhabitants resorted to violence as they did on a late occasion at Bradford; by resorting to this plan they would not be able effectually to resist its introduction. The Whigs seemed resolved to force this law upon them; if they did, they would produce such an amount of misery as was unparalleled in the annals of British history. If this starvation measure be forced upon the country, it will produce a great deal of crime, our prisons will be filled with delinquents, and much more serious expenses will be incurred by their prosecution, than the Poor-Law can save by preventing relief being given to the poor. The great argument for the passing of this law in the House of Commons, was, that if the old law was allowed to remain in force, it would ultimately take away the whole landed estates of the wealthy. The old law never took more than eight millions,



and out of that amount four millions were annually spent in litigation. This was, indeed, a strange argument. They begrudged a little pittance which was to be paid to the poor, and determined to prevent them having any aid if they could. This showed them the necessity of being ready to meet this enactment. If the people of England had done their duty to themselves before this Bill was introduced into the House of Commons, there would have been no necessity for any such meetings as these.”—*Ibid.*

“I have this moment returned from beholding one of those awful scenes—so grand, so terrific—which force man to acknowledge the existence and the power of that Being whose ‘is the sea,’ because ‘He made it;’ a scene which feeble man can never contemplate without reverence and awe. I have been standing on the beach, when a mighty storm was raging, and the sea was troubled; roaring, as the waves, in majestic grandeur, rolled upon the agitated surface, ‘and beat upon the dry land,’ which the same God had ‘prepared’ as a boundary for the safe residence of man. His voice, louder than the ocean’s thunder, proclaimed—‘hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther—here shalt thy proud waves be stayed.’ The tempest cracked and howled around me. The waves, in mountains of water, rolled in terrific masses, and, curling themselves together as they approached the shore, as if, in united force, to vent their rage at the interruption offered to their conquering course, they dashed themselves in fury upon the beach; thus, spending themselves in volumes of foam, covering the strand (which seemed to laugh at their menaces) with broad layers of quivering froth. The sight was truly magnificent. Thank God! no ships were nigh. No lives, as far as our eyes could reach, were endangered. As I stood listening to the howling of the wind, the roaring of the waves, and watching the raging of the ocean, I thought—just so furiously is man now raging against his fellow-man—just so is Infidelity now vainly daring to vent its rage and malice against Christianity—just now, embodied in the accursed New Poor-Law, is falsehood thus warring against truth—tyranny against justice—Satan against God! But, as surely as these waves are stayed by this sandy beach, so surely shall it soon be said to that power infernal, which now seems to hold our destiny in his hands, ‘Thus far shalt thou come, but no farther.’”—*Oastler’s*

*Letter to the Editors of the “Northern Star,”* dated from Rhyll, near St. Asaph, Nov. 2, 1838.

“That infamous, that vile, that atrocious ordinance (for it is no law in fact, nor should be obeyed as such), the accursed New Poor-Law Act—

‘Sprung from that parent of ten thousand crimes  
The new philosophy of modern times,’

a philosophy that reigns in all its hideous supremacy throughout our manufacturing and commercial systems, deforming and slaying labour’s sons and daughters: seeking to seduce our young men and maidens from the land of their sires—that they may toil in the swamps of Canada, or perish in the wilds of Australia. A pretended philosophy that crushes, through the bitter privations it inflicts upon us, the energies of our manhood, making our hearths desolate, our homes wretched, inflicting upon our hearts’ companions one eternal round of sorrow and sickening despair; nor is this all, when that we shall have arrived at a premature old age, our only reward for all our cares and toils is to be a horrible Bastile; where, separated from all that is near and dear to us, we may pine out the remaining period of our existence, exposed to all the brutality which demons could conceive, or worse than demons execute; and then the pauper’s funeral—consigned to the earth like dogs, or delivered over to the dissecting knife of the surgeon for the benefit of the rich! thus does this hypocritical, Malthusian philosophy, outrage the decrees of Heaven, trample upon the best feelings of humanity, and violate all the principles of justice and morality—thus do our scoundrel tyrants pursue us from the cradle to the grave, inflicting upon us all the bitterness of poverty, and thus punish us for being poor!”—*Extract from the London Democratic Association’s Address*, Oct. 13, 1838.

“Resolved,—That in the opinion of the electors of Southwark, now assembled, the Poor-Law Amendment-Act is bad and vicious in practice and in principle.

“That its working during the five years’ trial, now expiring, has fully proved it to be a measure fraught with injustice and oppression, which at once deprives the poor of England of their natural and lawful right to relief in distress and destitution, and the rate-payers of the kingdom of all management and control over their own funds, subscribed by themselves for the relief of the poor.

That it is now proved to be an arbitrary, oppressive, and cruel enactment, repugnant to the feelings of every rightly constituted mind, and therefore a blot upon the statute-book of a free and independent country, and ought at once to be expunged.

"That the mode of electing the Guardians is most unjust to the rate-payer, and destroys entirely the principle of representation, by giving a plurality of votes, with the power of voting by proxy to owners of property who do not contribute a shilling to the rates.

"That the authority given to the Poor-Law Commissioners to make rules and resolutions declared to be equal to distinct Acts of Parliament, is opposed to the mixed form of government of this kingdom.

"That the tyrannical abuse of the powers of the men filling the offices of Commissioners and Assistant-Commissioners, and the misrepresentations of facts and figures in their reports, has created disgust in the minds of all enlightened and honest men who have considered the subject.

"That the proposed offer of the workhouse to all, as a 'test of destitution,' without any distinction whatever as to age, character, or condition, is destructive to the principle of morality, and discourages all attempts on the part of the poor to endeavour to persevere in overcoming temporary difficulties, and has a tendency to pauperize them for life.

"That the Bastardy clauses of the Poor-Law Act are a cowardly attack on the female sex, who are the least able to support their offspring, and give encouragement to seduction, whilst they have a tendency to increase the horrible crime of murder.

"That as this obnoxious Act of Parliament is now expiring, this meeting calls upon the members of this borough, Daniel W. Harvey, Esq., and John Humphery, Esq., to use their utmost exertions in the House of Parliament to prevent the re-enactment of this Act in its present objectionable state; and this meeting cannot but express their earnest hope, that every constituency throughout the kingdom will call upon their representatives to assist in so just and holy a cause."—*Resolutions passed at the Southwark Meeting, May 1, 1839.*

"It was asked why they proposed the repeal, and not the amendment, of the law? It might as well have been asked why they should not attempt to wash a

blackamoor white. (A laugh.) The evil of the law did not consist alone in the innumerable cases of grievous cruelty, of flagrant injustice, of unexampled oppression, which had occurred under its operation; although such were the natural and necessary consequences of the system it had introduced, and where a tree was found to produce such fruits, it should, according to the language of holy writ, 'be hewn down and cast into the fire.' (Cheers.) Yet he should most strongly oppose the New Poor-Law, and he would call on them to join with him in procuring its repeal, even though no acts of tyranny, oppression, and injustice, had already occurred under its operation. (Cheers.) What was the evil of slavery, of which they had heard so much from those associations which had been formed for the very laudable purpose of putting an end to slavery in the colonies? Not that a slave in every case and of necessity must be miserable, and ill-treated; the evil consisted in this—that his good or ill-treatment, his happiness or misery, depended entirely on the will and caprice of his master. (Cheers.)"—*Earl Stanhope's Speech at the Freemasons' Tavern, Feb. 19, 1838.*

"I have lately endeavoured to demonstrate, at some length, the unprincipled violation of right effected by the New Poor-Law, and I am now in the course of detailing a series of enormities perpetrated under its provisions, which enormities have occasioned the untimely death of a considerable number of her Majesty's subjects. This is not a time for going at length into either of these points, but rather for briefly stating some of my reasons for believing that nothing short of an entire repeal of the law will meet the frightful exigencies of the case; and I do so believe, for the following, among other reasons:—

"Because the New Poor-Law, by substituting the word 'may' order relief, for 'shall' order relief, entirely abrogates the right of the poor to relief in their necessities; the power, said to be vested in magistrates, being merely permissive, and utterly nugatory in practice.

"Because vesting the absolute power of granting or of refusing relief in a Board of Guardians, who are themselves the payers, is equally at variance with natural justice, and with the recognized practice of mankind, who have never before authorized debtors, in possession of funds,



to lock themselves up in little squads, and there to determine whether they will or will not attend to the application of legal claimants.

"Because the power vested in the three Commissioners to make regulations, having, for all practical purposes, the force of laws enacted by the three estates of this realm, is a gross outrage on the British constitution in general, and a cruel infliction on the helpless portion of her majesty's subjects in particular, who may, by dietary and other regulations, emanating from this irresponsible power, be thinned out to any assignable extent. In the Bridgewater workhouse alone, a disease, occasioning the untimely deaths of about thirty persons, has been charged by the medical attendants on the dietary established by a regulation said to possess the force of law.

"Because the appointment of a large body of men under the designation of Assistant-Commissioners, forming a connecting and practically irresponsible agency between the Boards of Guardians and the Central Commission, is favourable to the perpetration of injuries on the poor, and to the concealment of even fatal abuses, the parties committing such abuses being, perhaps, the bosom friends of the Assistant-Commissioner appointed to inquire into them, who may visit, feast, and sleep at the houses of the accused, even while an inquiry is in progress, and conspire with them to frustrate the ends of justice, by garbling evidence and framing an exculpatory verdict, not supported by an atom of truth or probability.

"Because the peculiarly helpless condition of the poor renders it a matter of vital importance to them that their wrongs and necessities should be impartially and summarily inquired into by some responsible authority, and not aggravated, as they now are, by a conspiracy between the persons of whom they have to complain, and the functionary who is most prodigally paid from the sweat of the poor man's brow, under the pretence of watching his interest.

"Because transporting the decrepit and helpless poor from their villages into a workhouse, perhaps ten miles off, and thus tearing them from all familiar things, and consigning them to a dreary imprisonment for life in that which may be a pest-house, is a more severe and terrific punishment, than the law has hitherto provided for most of the enormous offences which ravage society.

"Because obliging the necessitous claimant on funds so long set apart for his necessities, to go eight or ten miles for that relief to which he had a legal claim in his own parish, is a monstrous outrage on justice, indefensible on any principle which would not comprehend the right of insultingly referring the claimant to the Land's-end, or to John o'Groat's house.

"And because the above, with other abominations, are so vitally interwoven with the New Poor-Law, that they cannot be extirpated without destroying the whole fabric, it is only to the repeal of the law that men can reasonably look for any relief from its iniquitous principles and provisions.

"I have thus endeavoured to furnish you, briefly, with the general results of that patient and impartial consideration which I have bestowed on this subject. I could have wished to have done this more in detail, but I will not refuse to do anything, because at present unable to do that which may possibly be more fully effected on another occasion. You will, I trust, excuse me for thus occupying your time, and for expressing an earnest hope that no persons will be engaged in this great cause, who will make it a vehicle for inflammatory or seditious doctrines, and that the class more immediately interested will remember, that up to the passing of this Act the British constitution had secured to them greater enjoyments, freedom, and privileges, than were ever secured to a corresponding class of society, in any age or country. That this plague-spot, which has for a time polluted our land, may be dissipated under the influence of a brighter order of things, is the most earnest wish of Sir,

"Your obedient humble servant,

"JOHN BOWEN."

—*Mr. Bowen's Letter read at the Freemasons' Tavern Anti-Poor-Law Meeting, Feb. 19, 1838.*

"I want no books, I want no arguments, I want no laws, I want no constitutions, I want no charters, or anything to tell me, and you want nothing to tell you, that being men, you have a right to be what the Father of men, whose children ye are, made you and wanted you to be. (Cheers.) It is said in the oldest book in the world, and I think the best book in the world, that God made man in his own likeness (he did), and if God be what we have always been taught to understand that he is, wise and great, and happy,

then to be made like God is to be made great and wise, and good, and happy *after our kind*. (Hear, hear.) We are told, that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; the heaven was spread for us, the sun to shine by day, and the stars to glitter and twinkle and smile by night, and the round world for us to tread upon, and to walk abroad in. He has told us that *this* earth was made, not for ornament, not for amusement, not out of any intention to display a mere act of power, but that it was made as a house for man to live in—(hear, hear)—as a field for man to till, as a storehouse holding everything that is good and useful, to which man was to have free admission, free ingress and egress, and going in and coming out, and always getting from that storehouse everything which he needed, either for his body or his soul. ('Ay, ay,' hear, and cheers.) We are told that this earth, after it had been made, and after God had walked over it himself, as an architect would walk over the building which he had erected, so we are told that God walked throughout the world, and looked at everything to examine whether it had been made according to the plan, and whether it answered the purpose, and, after he had looked at the whole of it, it is said that he made this declaration,—‘Behold, all things are very good;’ and having found that all things were very good, he made a deed of settlement, and took that deed and gave it into the hands of Adam and Eve, and said unto them—‘Here is the earth; I give it unto you; take it, and be masters of it; till it, and it will bear enough for you and your offspring; and lest you should have any doubt at all, be fruitful—don’t be afraid—be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, for all things are yours.’ (Loud cheers.) Now I go to that; I stand by that; and I know that if God be true—if he be according to his word—that will stand by me. (Cheers.) I have been lately told by the Whigs, in answer to this argument—I contend, you know, that the end of all law, whether of God or of man, is not ‘the greatest happiness to the greatest number,’ for that would be committing an act of injustice upon the few; and we have no more right, being many, to commit an act of injustice upon the few than they, being few, have to commit an act of injustice upon the many, and therefore, I hold and I teach that the end of all government, Divine or human, is by teaching what is

right and doing what is good to produce and promote the happiness of all. (Loud cheers.) Well, now how do the Whigs get over that? They cannot say that it is a bad thing to make all happy; and, therefore, they say it is a very sweet idea, a very lovely thought, a very beautiful term; and if Stephens could only awake from his dreams some morning, and find his paradise, it would be all very well. (Hear.) But they say, ‘how stands the case?’ and they make it out that the case stands thus—that God never intended happiness to be the lot of man. (Shame, shame.) They say that revelation and reason and experience all go to prove that God Almighty never intended the human race to be happy. They cannot get over the argument from the creation, and, therefore, like the Devil, their father, and the father of lies—(bravo)—who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, and who has spit out lies and murders through the tube of Whiggery ever since, like their father the Devil, they go to blast the garden of Eden, and turn round upon us, and say, ‘ay, but man has fallen and God cursed him.’ Very well, I never flinch. (Cheers.) If they will come up to the rail I will come up to the rail too. Now then for the curse. God said unto man, ‘in the sweat of thy brow, shalt thou eat bread all the days of thy life until thou return unto the dust, for dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return.’ That is the curse; will anybody object to it? (No, no, and tremendous cheers.) Now what will the infidel Bishop of Norwich,—what will the practical Atheists of the Whig party say to that? God has declared that if a man *will* work he *shall* eat bread, not only to-day or to-morrow, but all the days of his life. (Hear, hear, hear.) Don’t be in a hurry. A man can only sweat so long as he has moisture; he cannot sweat after his moisture and his gums are dried up. He can only sweat through manhood. In old age he cannot sweat, and that shows that God intended and designed, that if man were willing to work so long as he has manly strength and power and vigour to do it, he should be able, during the time of his natural strength in manhood, to provide enough not only while he was working to supply the wear and tear of his body, but he should have it in his power to provide enough during manhood for his old age. (Hear and cheers.) God has thrown man upon his own resources: his resources are to work while he is young, and while he has all the marrow of goodly



manhood within him. If he will do that, God says he shall have bread enough to eat until he return to the dust. (Hear.) Now I think that is settled: I think it is shown even from the Bible that God meant man to be middlinglike happy; ay, to be infinitely happy as compared with man in his present condition in this atheistic country of yours. (Cheers.) Now then for woman. (Cheers.) God cursed woman as well as man. The first curse of woman was, that she was to be a help meet for man, or that she should be man's companion, and keep him company all the days of his life. Anybody any objection to that? (No, no, and cheers.) The next part of the curse that was put upon woman was, that she should be in subjection to her own husband, her desire should be unto her husband, and he should rule over her—(hear, hear) and not the mill-owners—(tremendous cheering)—not the coal-pit master—(continued cheering)—not the Poor-Law Commissioners. (Cheers.) I have seen, since I came into this town, women whose faces are as black as soot. Now I want to know whether these men are true, and God a liar, or God true and these men liars, for God says that woman is to be subject to her own husband and nobody else; and therefore I argue, from the word of God, that man is to be the bread provider, and woman the bread distributor. (Tremendous cheers.) That man is to be the bread maker, and woman the bread baker, and that she is to deal it out to all her little ones, and all that go to make up the household at home. (Cheers.) The woman's factory is on the hearth-stone and over the kitchen fire; there is the woman's world. Her desire is to be at her husband's hearth and at her husband's bed. Her desire is to be with her children, those dear babes, sweet pledges of love, and tokens of God's benevolence, which he has been mercifully pleased to bless them with. (Cheers.) That brings me to the 3rd part of the curse upon woman; she is in sorrow to bring forth children. Now I will maintain, against all the interested, detestable, and damnable doctrines of the Whig political economists, that woman, dear, lovely, virtuous woman, was made by the God of heaven, his last work and his best work, to be at our side—to be our companion—to be our solace and our support—to be our crown of rejoicing—to be the mother of our children, the rearer of our babes—to go up the hill with us, and down the hill with us, until, at the hill's foot of life

we lay us down and sleep in peace, and awake together reunited in yonder blissful paradise above. (Loud cheers.) When I say that God meant man to be happy, as the end of his work and the object of his administration here upon earth, do they think I am fool enough to mean that the bulk of mankind are never to have the tooth-ache or the head-ache—that their children are never to have the small-pox or the measles, and that their wives are never to die in child-bearing! No; we know full well that disease is ours; we know full well that God's judgments are ours. Sometimes he takes the ewe lamb out of the fold; sometimes he takes away the desire of our eyes as with a stroke, and the wife that shared our bed and slept upon our pillow—the wife of our bosom, is sometimes taken away; but God doeth it; and I teach and strive to learn that lesson, 'the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' If God should take away my babe, I should weep; but I would not sorrow as one without hope, for I should know that the little budling, the flowerling of my love, was only transplanted into yonder garden to flourish and never fade—to blossom and never decay. (Cheers.) If God should take away my wife, I should sorrow and mourn, but I should think of the time when, being in God's keeping yonder, and I being in God's keeping here, our hearts I know would be again united, never to be parted any more. (Hear, hear, hear.) But is there anything in the word of God of the Poor-Law Commissioners taking away my child or my wife? Are you ever told in the word of God that you are to be resigned—that you are to be submissive—that you are to be obedient—that you are to be patient, while the Poor-Law Commissioners take away your children or your wives? ('No, no.') No, nowhere. Nature, reason, instinct, revelation, say—'If you be men, rise up; strike home; fight for your wives, your children, and your homes. (Tremendous and deafening cheers.) I know full well that our frail flesh is heir to many ills; all I ask for is, that the poor should have it in their power, when God visits them with affliction, to enjoy those consolations which he has offered them. That is all. Your children will have the measles, the small-pox, the typhus fever, I cannot hinder it when it comes; but a great deal of it might be prevented. (Hear, hear.) For when does it come? hardly ever but when starva-

tion comes before it. (Cheers.) Now, cut away the root, and the tree will not flourish in our country; and when it does come, all I ask for them is, that the mother shall have it in her power to go to the apothecary's and confectioner's, and buy the drug at the one shop, and the currant juice at the other, and give the medicine, so that at all events the poor dying child may expire with as little possible pain, and with the smile of affection upon its lips. (Hear, hear.) All I ask is, that when a poor woman stands alone in the world,—the oak being shattered from its top to its root, shattered as by the lightning stroke of disease or of death,—that she, the ivy, now left with nothing to cling to—all I ask is, that she should have a prop—not a Poor-Law Bastile; a staff—not of separation, not of starvation and death—but that she should have the pillar of kindness and sufficient support, of comfort and consolation. (Hear, hear, hear.) All I contend for is, that in this chequered scene, that in this transitory state of things, the ills of life should be fairly shared, we bearing each other's burdens, the rich bearing the burdens of the poor, and the poor bearing the burdens of the rich, and so fulfilling the royal law of Christ. (Cheers.) All I ask is, that in this vale of tears, in this difficult and distressing and dangerous state of existence in many respects, we should share and share something alike of the sweets as well as the bitters. I contend that not any one class can, or ought to be exempt from misery; but I do contend that the rich have no right to a monopoly of the superfluities and indulgencies of life, while the poor are condemned to a monopoly of wretchedness and misery. (Cheers.) Now I love that argument; and I will compel the enemies of the people, Whig, Tory, or Radical, Pagan or Christian, in profession, I will compel the enemies of God and man, either to answer that argument, to your satisfaction, or otherwise to allow that argument to be carried into practical operation.”—*The Rev. J. R. Stephens's Speech, at the Wigan Meeting, November 12, 1838.*

“Dr. Fletcher was then introduced to the meeting, and was received with loud cheers. He should have been glad to meet the working men of Halifax had it not been for the thrilling consideration which was everywhere placarded on the walls of their town, requiring £6,800 for the erection of a Bastile. (Hear.) This was too fearful a consideration even to

allow him to indulge in that degree of pleasure which he would otherwise have enjoyed in coming amongst them. (Hear, hear.) This fact furnished another among a thousand proofs of the baseness, hypocrisy, falsehood, and fraud, by which the Government of the country was carried on. (Hear, hear.) The first resolution of the Committee appointed for taking evidence during the last session of Parliament as to the working of the New Poor-Law for the purpose of propounding some amendments, recommended that henceforth the Guardians should be permitted, uncontrolled by the Commissioners, to give out-door relief to all those who were married previous to the passing of this Act, while they saw at the same time, the Commissioners commanding the Guardians of this and other towns to build prisons which could not possibly be necessary if even these recommendations were carried into effect. (Hear, hear.) But they would be convinced that it was merely a base and hypocritical delusion, to endeavour to lull the people asleep and put an end to the agitation, which, he was happy to tell them, their enemies admitted was not only efficient in keeping out this accursed law, but had also had the effect of obliging them to treat their poor victims of the south with much more kindness, and with much less of devilish cruelty, than they would otherwise have been. This was a gratifying fact; for even if they should fail in their efforts to repeal this accursed measure (which they certainly would till they obtained universal suffrage), it was something to know that a dozen agitators had had the power of drawing some of the fangs of this monster. But it was not a dozen agitators, but a dozen thousands—ay, hundreds of thousands of agitators, that had struck terror to the hearts of the people's tyrants, and thus another useful lesson had been taught them—that the people, when united, were irresistible. After the recommendation above-mentioned, they were led to hope that the Bastardy clauses would be repealed. And what was the only recommendation which received the least attention of this Committee? Why, that the poor girls who had been seduced should have damages for seduction, and they were to be left to get them as they best could. (Hear, hear, hear.) After some other recommendations with regard to the lessening the size of the Unions, and with reference to medical relief and other matters, they



recommended that the Guardians should have the power of relieving persons who had large families. (Hear, hear.) And how was this to be done? By taking part of their children into the work-houses. (Groans.) And all this was in England, the boast of which was, only a few years ago, that it was the only country in the world which had a word really expressive of all the feelings which we attach to the word home. (Hear, hear.) They were not content with degrading the people to the condition of brutes, but they seemed as if they were determined to destroy those feelings which they had in common with brutes. (Cheers.) There was not an animal in nature which would not stand by its parental feelings. There was not one so tame that would not bristle up to defend its young when attacked. And yet, they thought, fools and madmen as they were, that they could be guilty of these outrages against human nature, and that the people would submit to them. After some remarks on the insufficiency of the Bastile allowances, and the horrid cruelties which were practised upon the paupers, the speaker adverted to an Act of Parliament passed in the reign of Elizabeth, by which it was enacted, that every person who built a cottage should attach to it four acres of land for the maintenance of the occupants of such cottage. This they kept in cultivation, which, in addition to their labours at the loom, rendered them a comfortable subsistence. (Hear, hear.) Had this law continued to be enforced, they would have no barren wastes as they have now; and they would have had still less necessity for locking up their poor in the Bastiles on the one hand, or transporting them on the other. (Cheers.)—*Halifax Meeting, July 28, 1838.*

“When Legislators who were set up for the service and protection of the people, their liberties and properties, shall attempt to enslave the nation, or by force or fraud, or unconstitutional legislation, to take away those liberties or properties, such Legislators, in that case, are properly, and with the greatest aggravation **REBELS.**”—*Locke.*

“It may be as much duty, at one time, to resist Government, as it is at another to obey it.”—*Paley.*

“Against this law (law of nature) prescription, statute, nor custom may not avail; and if any be brought in against it, they be not prescriptions, statutes, nor customs, but corruptions,—things void

and against justice.”—*Doctor and Student.*—Ed. 1688.

“This was a law which interfered with all their local rights. Mark it; he would not care if this law *did* make paupers happy; he would oppose it. (Hear, hear.) He would not care if the Bastiles were palaces, and the people were fed like princes, still he would oppose it. (Loud cheers.) He would not care if this law gave the Commissioners liberty to command princes to be paupers’ lackeys, and ordained that paupers should ride in princes’ carriages, he would oppose it still, because it interfered with every local right, and because it attacked every man in every corner in the land. (Loud cheers.) Let them take their own case. He lived in a part of that Union; the rate-payers of Fixby had always managed their own parish affairs, and their paupers and rate-payers had always been contented and happy together. (Hear, hear.) They had never refused to pay anything that had been required of them from any other township, and yet they were deemed of being unworthy of being trusted with their own money, and their paupers were deemed unworthy to reside in their own townships, and among their own neighbours and friends. (Hear, hear.) They had their poor relieved without interfering with their liberty. They opened their door when they liked, and they shut it when they liked. They received their several allowances according to circumstances, and they went round in the township to see their old neighbours and friends. (Hear, hear.) They were formerly rate-payers (hear, hear), and, though they were poor, they had not lost their character (hear, hear), and they ought not, therefore, to lose their rights. (Loud cheers.) They went to see each other sometimes; and sometimes they came to his house, where, occasionally there might be a few ribs of mutton, or something of the kind, which they did not use, and they took it away with them with all goodwill. (Hear, hear.) And who had a right to interfere with them? (‘Nobody,’ from several voices.) Ay, and nobody should. (Tremendous cheering.) This law was such a direct interference with all their local rights, that he would rather die than see it established. (Continued cheers.) They were told that the Guardians were popularly elected; but what was the use of their popular election, when the Guardians themselves were wholly powerless.

(Hear, hear.) The Chairman of the Dewsbury Board, the other day, said he had been to London to receive his instructions, and if he could get two Guardians to act with him, he would act as he thought proper. (Hear, hear.) If there was a Guardian before him, he certainly would recommend him to make his will (laughter); and he was going to tell them what was coming to pass. All sorts of deception had been practised upon the people by the friends of this cursed law. All sorts of misrepresentation had been carried to the Houses of Commons and Lords by the friends of this law, and one and another got up in these Houses, and said, that the people were favourable to it. (Hear, hear.) Even Earl Fitzwilliam had declared that the people of the West Riding had approved of it, and had found out that it was a very beneficial measure. (Shame, shame.) If these gentlemen thus deceived themselves, the people could not help it; but he had often told them of the perilous state to which they were driving this country. (Hear, hear.) He hated blows and bloodshed and assassination; but if blood was to be shed, he would rather have it done openly than on the sly. (Hear, hear.) If the friends of the New Poor-Law were determined to defy the power of the Omnipotent, why then he would say, 'Have at ye.' (Tremendous and deafening cheers.) He was not long ago in London, and a noble lord told him, that he had been conversing with another nobleman on the dissatisfaction occasioned by the New Poor-Law, when that nobleman replied, 'Oh, d—n them, a regiment of dragoons would put them down directly.' (Hear, hear.) But he (Mr. Oastler) knew better than that. (Hear.) He had been talking with an old sergeant in her Majesty's service, and he had said to him, 'King (laughter), when they bring us out among the people in single troops we are forced to *seem* to do our duty. But depend upon it, that if all the British army was fairly marched against the people on that question, they would die before they would fight against them for that measure.' (Hear, hear, and loud cheers.) If then, the friends of the Poor-Law relied upon the army, they would rely upon a sword that would pierce them through. (Hear, hear.) But what were they to do? ('We wont have it,' from scores of voices.) Well, if they chose to be the tools of the THREE SCOUNDRELS, they would do it as scoundrels, and they would soon discover all

the consequences of their folly. All he could say to the Guardians was, that if they were determined to try to build Bastilles, he would try to pull them down. (Tremendous cheers.) But what should they do? He knew what the friends of the New Poor-Law wanted; they wanted to spread a net for the whole land; they wanted to destroy our local governments, and to infest the land with prisons belonging to Government, and they would become Government slaves in the hope of advancement. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) But that should not be. (Cheers.) He knew that in the agricultural districts the people would not stand it, nor would they *petition any more against it.* — *Mr. Oastler's Speech at the Halifax Meeting, July 28, 1838.*

"For the first time in the history of the country the New Poor-Law, they were aware, gave to three Commissioners appointed by the Crown the authority and power of making rules, orders, and regulations, which were to have the force and effect of law—which were to be binding as so many Acts of Parliament, which no man could venture to resist without subjecting himself to fine and imprisonment. (Hear.) This principle extended throughout the entire Bill; it pervaded it from the first page to the last. Those, therefore, who talked of the amendment of the Bill could surely never have read it, or they must have found that, taking from it the unconstitutional and despotic powers conferred by it on the Commissioners, the Bill would fall altogether to fragments; every vestige, the very foundation, would be taken away. (Cheers.) Nor was this his only objection to the principle of the Bill; he must strongly object and solemnly protest against a Bill which, under the specious title of 'An Act to Amend the Poor-Law,' was, in fact, an abrogation and repeal of that statute of Elizabeth which had been truly designated, by no less an authority than Lord Bacon, the poor man's charter. (Cheers.) Most of all, should he protest against such an Act being passed by those who called themselves the representatives of the people, but who were not, in fact, what they ought to be—also the representatives of the labouring classes. (Cheers.) He had asked, in the House of Lords, whether Parliament so constituted had the legal power, without the sanction and concurrence of the labouring classes, to repeal an Act which was intended for their benefit, and which,



during a period of more than two centuries, had been of signal service to them. (Cheers.) Nor was this all. Another principle of the Bill which would not admit of amendment, and called for nothing less than a total repeal, was what had been truly called the pivot on which the whole turned—the workhouse system (groans); that system which, for the first time in the history of the world, and in this country, calling itself civilized and enlightened, and boasting of its free institutions, punished poverty as a crime (cheers), and immured in prisons those who solicited relief. (Cheers.)”—*Earl Stanhope's Speech at the Freemasons' Tavern, Feb. 19, 1838.*

“Mr. Anson said, he was sorry to intrude himself upon a meeting like the present, assembled to remonstrate, on legal and constitutional principles, against the perpetuation of a measure which would be a curse to England. He regretted to see, that the other day there had been an expression of gratification in the House of Commons, that the Minister of the Crown in that House had consented to reduce the continuance of the Commission from ten down to five years. The meeting would remember that in the original measure the powers of the Commissioners were limited to the period of five years, and then they were to cease; but it was now seen that the Commissioners, having themselves drawn the new Bill, asked, by their last report, the House of Commons to consent to their re-appointment. (Cheers.) It was said they did not seek this for the sake of their salaries, but that the re-appointment was sought for the sake of the salaries, and the salaries only, was clear from the fact that Mr. Frankland Lewis, the first Chief Commissioner, had resigned his office, and had prevailed upon the Government to appoint his son in his stead. (Cheers.) But the Bill now before the House of Commons carried the exclusive principle still further than had been attempted in the Bill of last year. The present measure provided, that ground should be attached to the workhouses, in order that, even after death, the detestable exclusive principle, so horrible to the contemplation of the poor man, should be carried out. Why, he begged to ask, should not the churchyard, in which there was no distinction between the rich and the poor, be opened for the reception of the poor man's remains? (Cheers.) But here, under the present Bill, power was con-

ferred upon the Commissioners to issue orders, which would be tantamount in force and effect to any clause in any Act of Parliament, for the establishment of burial-grounds for paupers to be attached to each workhouse. (Cries of ‘Shame.’) What did the meeting think of the circular order, issued by the Commissioners in the month of July last, prohibiting the Boards of Guardians from giving a feast once a-year to the paupers in their workhouses? Some of the Boards had resisted this order, and what had been the consequence? Why, in the Union in which he lived—the Kensington Union—the Board gave them a feast on last Christmas-day, and the Auditor of the Union had disallowed the expense of that feast in the accounts of the Board. (Cheers, and cries of ‘Shame.’) Now these were facts which he hoped would induce this assembly to be unanimous in the great object for which they were met—namely, to petition and remonstrate with the legislature not to carry this iniquitous, unconstitutional, and detestable Bill further. (Cheers and shouts of ‘We'll see about that by-and-by.’) From the short experience he had had, he was convinced that when a man was paid to do a certain duty, he became one of the greatest tyrants in existence. The Guardians fairly elected (and not by proxy votes) by the rate-payers, ought, in his judgment, to have the sole power to manage their own finances, and look after the care and comforts of their own pauper neighbours. He was surprised that no member of the House of Commons, professing liberal principles, should not have long ago proposed that, as plurality of voting was good in local affairs, it ought to be adopted in matters of a national character. This they durst not do, because they would have to go back to their constituents to be elected by single votes. (Cheers.) He must also remind the meeting of the distressing events to which the workhouse test, as applied under the orders of the Commissioners, had led during the late inclement season. It was manifest that, but for the charity of many humane individuals, there must have been hundreds of cases of death from starvation. (Cheers, and cries of ‘That's true.’) He was sure the hon. member for Finsbury (Mr. Wakley), in his office of coroner for the western division of the county of Middlesex, must have had numerous cases brought before him of persons who had actually died from want,

rather than seek relief and shelter within the walls of the workhouse. (Cheers.) The last report made to Parliament was one of the most horrible proceedings he had ever witnessed. It gave to the members of the House of Commons the best possible face of the dietary tables, for it set forth table No. 1, which gave to each pauper 15 oz. of meat per week; but it did not publish table No. 4, by which only 4 oz. of meat per week were allowed to each pauper inmate of a workhouse. That fact alone ought to induce the House of Commons to let the Bill drop, so far at least as the Commissioners were concerned. If the powers were left, as they ought to be, in the hands of the Boards of Guardians, the poor and the rate-payers would have some protection, because the Guardians were elected only for twelve months, and, therefore, if they drew the screw too tight upon the poor, the rate-payers could turn them out, and elect in their places more humane men. Not so as to the Commissioners. They could not be turned out, and the consequence had been, that the poor were actually put into the scale and weighed, in order to see how little they really could exist upon. (Cheers.) He regretted that throughout England there was not that general feeling against this odious law which, in his judgment, ought to exist—he regretted that no large meetings had been assembled to petition and remonstrate against its further continuance. But it was the poor man's cause, and, therefore, the rich did not come forward as they ought to oppose it."—*Freemasons' Tavern*, March 11, 1841.

"Mr. Wakley, who was loudly cheered on presenting himself, said,—A statement has been made at the meeting with regard to my conduct, and I now rise for the purpose of answering what I do regard as a very serious, but at the same time one of the most unfortunate accusations that could be alleged against me in the discharge of my public Parliamentary duty. It has been stated, that I have promised to support the Poor-Law Bill with the Amendments which Lord J. Russell has proposed. Nothing can be more false. (Cheers.) What I said in the House of Commons was this—that the proposed alterations which the noble lord had announced, so far as they went, would give satisfaction ('No, no'); and at that time I understood the noble lord to say, that he intended by his alterations that the new Bill should not affect the

parishes in London which had local Acts, and that the Commission should continue, not for ten, but only five years. I am against its continuance for a day. (Cheers.) I regard that law as the most iniquitous that ever was fastened upon the people, the foulest stain upon the legislature, a national disgrace, an instrument of torture directed against the poor. I approve of it in no form nor shape. From the bottom of my soul I detest it. I have opposed it whenever an opportunity presented itself; and I beg of you to recollect, that when it was enacted I was not a member of the House of Commons. If I had been a member at the time it would not have passed so easily. (Cheers.) In justice to our hon. Chairman I ought to have spoken of him before I spoke of myself. Upon all occasions of this kind, good temper, forbearance, liberality, toleration, should be our motto. (Cheers.) The greatest difference of opinion may prevail among us. It is impossible for men whose heads are differently constituted to think alike. Are we to hate each other and be angry because we differ? No such thing. Nothing would be more foolish. If any intemperate warmth be exhibited at a public meeting, if we are hurried away by indiscretion, not guided by reason, our proceedings can do no good either here or elsewhere; but if, with feeling subdued, and judgment called into full action, we exercise that reason with which God has gifted us, whatever we may determine will be regarded as the result of rational and considerate men, and our decision, let it go where it may, must carry due weight with it. (Cheers.) I frankly own to you that I have in coming here a mixed motive. My first object is to concur with you in your expression of detestation of the New Poor-Law Bill. My next object, and that a most influential one, was to pay my respects to our Chairman, whose conduct I had the opportunity of witnessing in the House of Commons for more than four years. I worked with him day by day, when you did not see him, when the public had no opportunity of seeing him, and he worked then like a slave on behalf of the poor (cheers), at an enormous cost, and labouring under an anxiety of mind which I shall never forget to the last hour of my life. (Loud cheers.) Whatever might be his politics, whatever difference may exist between us upon some political questions, while I have breath I shall never fail to respect that man for his labours in the cause of the



poor. (Loud cheers.) I have still another reason for recollecting him ; and I allude to it now more particularly, because Mr. Cleave observed, that they knew well Mr. Walter's political history. Do you recollect a motion I made in the House of Commons for the recall of the Dorchester labourers? I shall not forget that night. There were 400 members present—more than 300 on the Tory benches. Out of that number four only voted for their return, and one of those four was that man, Mr. Walter. (Loud cheers.) After such a case as that, supposing him to be opposed to us in opinion with regard to the suffrage, are we not to pay him due respect for his exertions? (Cheers.) To be sure we ought. We must never forget those kindly, generous, and noble acts which he has done on the part of the poor. (Cheers.) I say I never will forget them. (Cheers.) I believe that the particular political opinions he holds are honestly entertained, a credit I claim for myself, and readily accord to all of you. (Cheers.) But if it was praiseworthy in those four men to separate themselves from those with whom they were accustomed to act, I must say with regard to Mr. Walter, that I do not recollect any vote he ever gave against the interest of the poor, with the exception of the suffrage question. (Cheers.) But is that even a question on which we are all bound to agree? You believe, and I used to believe, that reform would accomplish everything for us. I recollect when the cry was raised in this room, 'The bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill;' and any man who should have opened his mouth to propose anything further would have had a tin can or broken bottle thrust down his throat. You have had that bill, and what has it done? If I could have believed ten years ago that reform would have ended in the enactment of the Poor-Law Bill, rather would I have had my tongue drop from my mouth than have advocated it. (Cheers.) See what it has done."—*Freemasons' Tavern Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, March 11, 1841.

"The Chairman said, that before the business proceeded further he thought it right to read to the meeting a letter he had received from Earl Stanhope, which it was peculiarly proper should be communicated in the present state of the proceedings, because the Noble Earl offered at the latter end of his letter some counsel which it would be wise for the meeting to

adopt. The Noble Earl was one of the firmest opponents of the New Poor-Law, and had presided on the only two occasions upon which meetings on that subject had been held in London. The letter was as follows:—

"Derby, March 7, 1841.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I learn by the newspapers that a public meeting, at which you are to preside, is to be held on the 11th inst., for the purpose of sending a remonstrance to Parliament against the New Poor-Law, and I deeply regret that it is not in my power to attend it. I should upon that, as upon every other occasion, be most anxious to co-operate with my fellow-citizens in defending their rights, which I shall always have at heart, and in opposing, by legal and constitutional means, the continuance of a law which is most detestable and despotic, and which was truly said by my venerable friend, the late Lord Eldon, to be 'the most infamous law that ever was enacted in any Christian country.' Under that law parishes are deprived of the right of self-government—the labouring classes cease to enjoy their natural rights—poverty is treated as a crime and is punished by imprisonment—and the dictators exercise a tyranny which it is now intended to continue and confirm, but which our forefathers would not have endured. The example given in the metropolis will, I trust, be followed throughout the country by all those who have patriotism and public spirit, and who desire to restore the rights and to promote the welfare of their fellow-citizens. As for those who are not animated by such feelings, but by selfish and sordid motives, and who approved of the New Poor-Law in the hope that it would reduce the poor-rates, they have in many districts met with the reward which they deserved, and have found by experience, that the rates have in consequence been increased instead of being diminished.

"I am most strongly of opinion, and I have expressed it in my place in Parliament, that the labouring classes have a right to be fully represented in the House of Commons, and that no other representation is just in itself, or can be satisfactory to the people. It has, indeed, been shown by that most odious and oppressive enactment, the New Poor-Law, and also by other measures which have been unjust and injurious to the labouring classes, that those classes ought to be fully represented. Although these are opinions which I am able and willing to defend, whenever and wherever it is requisite, I would not propose at the meeting any resolution on the subject, and I am anxious that the object for which it will be assembled may be cordially supported by all those who are present, whatever may be the difference in their political sentiments."

Then followed a compliment to him (the Chairman), which he must be excused for omitting."—*Freemasons' Tavern Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, March 11, 1841.

"It was quite clear that a vast difference of circumstances existed between the necessity of Poor-Laws in Ireland, and in those which had led to the miscalled

amended Poor-Law in this country. He begged, however, the meeting to understand, that though he was opposed *toto cælo* to the present Poor-Law, he was an advocate for giving relief to the poor, and he believed in the existence of an abstract right of the poor to share in the produce of the earth. (Cheers and confusion.) Such, however, had not been the object or end of the present Irish Poor-Law, and that it was not so was stated so much better than any words he could give utterance to, by a gentleman in a speech delivered a few days ago, that he (Dr. Maunsell) would read an extract from that speech. It was a speech delivered in Cork by a gentleman of the name of Hayes, who for a long period had been the devoted advocate for the introduction of Poor-Laws in that country. This gentleman came forward the other day, at the annual election of Guardians of the poor for the city of Cork, to tender his resignation of a seat at that Board. In doing so he said 'the framers of the Act entitled it 'an Act for the more effectual relief of the destitute poor, which was holding forth a great boon and a great blessing, and he had hoped, that by a zealous attention to the details of the law, a system still better would be worked out than that proposed by the law. (Cheers.) But he regretted to say, that from his experience in its working his opinion was entirely altered, and he now held it to be a foul imposition upon the country, and he therefore could no longer consent to remain in connexion with its administration. (Loud cheers.) This was the opinion he had given at the Board of Guardians, and he came here this day intending not to accept any delegation under a law so destructive to the country. The term on the statute-book 'for the relief of the destitute poor' was a foul lie, for it was an Act to render the poor destitute, and the destitute hopeless. (Loud cheers.) The Act had failed in its purposes, and was aggravated by the conduct of the Commissioners, who had applied a stringent construction to its clauses that never could be thought of by an honest man. (Cheers.) The very diet of the workhouse fell far short of that given to convicted felons; but that Act which rendered the poor destitute, the destitute hopeless—gave £67,000 per annum to worthless Commissioners and Assistant-Commissioners, and to useless secretaries.' (Great applause.) Such was the opinion which had been expressed on the Irish Poor-Law Act by a man who had paid zealous atten-

tion to the law, who had assisted in carrying it out into operation, and who, therefore, was well qualified to judge of its working. The matter, however, at present in hand for consideration, was the despotic character of the New Poor-Law in this country (though in Ireland it was still more despotic), and to him it was matter of surprise and astonishment that such an Act had ever been passed by the British Legislature. And what was the nature of the Poor-Law sent as a boon to Ireland? It provided for the election of a number of Guardians of the poor in each Union, but this was in practice a mockery of the right representation of the rate-payers. The Guardians so elected had practically only the power to register, and to carry into operation the decrees and orders of the tyrants of Somerset-house. They ordered the election of a body of men to take care of the money of the rate-payers, who were to elect them, and to watch over the interests of the poor of whom they were to be the Guardians. But these Commissioners had the power to frame orders which had the force and effect of law, and those who refused to obey or who disobeyed these orders were not even to be tried by a jury, but were to be carried before a magistrate, who was empowered to fine the party for the first offence £5, for the second £20, and for the third, the disobedient individual might be indicted as for a misdemeanour, and be placed on the treadmill for the term of one calendar month. (Cheers.) This was the law which was said to be designed as a relief to the poor of Ireland. He had already told the meeting, that these elections of Boards of Guardians were a mockery of representation of the rate-payers, and he would prove them to be so. It was true, the Guardians were nominated and elected by the rate-payers, but if the Guardians so elected acted in opposition to the orders and decrees of the Commissioners, the Commissioners could at once dismiss them from their offices. (Cheers.) Again, the Commissioners had unlimited power to exact from the country any sum of money they thought fit to ask for. They had already placed a dead weight of £1,500,000 upon the country, for building workhouses—not almshouses, but prisons for the reception and confinement of the poor. But there was nothing to prevent the Commissioners from exacting £10,000,000; for if the Guardians refused to lend their assistance, the authorities at Somerset-house could dismiss them, and direct the



election of a new Board ; and should the rate-payers still return the same individuals who had thus been faithful to their interest, and watchful over those of the poor, the Commissioners, by the provisions of this worse than Algerine Act, were empowered to appoint paid Commissioners to carry their orders into effect. (Cheers.) Some persons had spoken of many flagrant jobs having been committed under this law ; but what had been done to conceal from the light of day the operations of the Commissioners ? Why, they actually had excluded the press from the meetings of the Boards of Guardians, and had published an order making it penal for any reporter to attend such meetings. He could state many instances of gross jobs, but he would only detain the meeting by the mention of one case which had lately occurred. It happened, that a great job had been perpetrated by the Commissioners (without the knowledge of the Board of Guardians) in the Union of Mountmellick. The job was this—they had purchased a site upon which to erect the Union workhouse, without notice to the Guardians—without advertisements to excite competition, and they had taken ground at £10 per acre, while in the same district there was plenty of ground to be had at £4 per acre. On the fact coming to their knowledge the Guardians dared to remonstrate with—to oppose the Commissioners. Dr. Jacob, one of the Board of Guardians, a gentleman who had been unanimously elected by the free suffrages of his brother rate-payers, came forward to oppose this job, and he succeeded. He proposed a petition to Parliament ; he was instrumental in passing resolutions by the Board condemnatory of the conduct of the Commissioners ; he had himself reported the proceedings ; and what had been the result ? Within the last fortnight the annual election of Guardians came on, and this gentleman came to the meeting, and as his last act as a member of the Board, he supported the petition to Parliament against the Commissioners, and read the following letter, which he had received from the Government in Ireland. The letter was dated ‘Dublin Castle, Feb. 25, 1841,’ and was as follows :—

“SIR,—I am directed by the Lord Lieutenant to state, that it appears to his Excellency that the four medical situations which you hold are fully sufficient to occupy your time without superadding the duty of a member of the Board of Guardians ; and, consequently, that in the event of your being again placed in that situation, his Excellency will think it right to appoint

some other medical attendant to the Lunatic Asylum.

“‘I am, Sir, &c.

“N. H. M'DONALD.’

(Cheers, and cries of ‘Shame.’) Here, then, was a most useful and zealous member of the Board dismissed by the Government at the instance of the Commissioners, for the conscientious discharge of that which he felt to be his duty. (Cheers.) It would be a useless waste of the time of the meeting were he (Dr. Maunsell) to state other instances. Was not this single case sufficient to show the Commissioners should no longer exist—not for five years more, but for even one year ? (Cheers and applause.) Was the meeting aware of the danger of intrusting to three dictators the power of legislation for the nation ? (Cheers.) Was the time arrived when the constitutional authority of King, Lords, and Commons, exercised at St. James’s Palace and at Westminster, should be placed in the hands of three men sitting in Somerset-house ? (Great cheers.) Again, were these Commissioners precisely such men as were fit to be intrusted with these extraordinary powers—were they persons to whom they could commit the trust—

“‘Ne quid detrimenti capiat respublica ?’

Dr. Maunsell concluded by moving in form the first resolution as already set forth.”—*Dr. Maunsell, Anti-Poor-Law Meeting at the Freemasons’ Tavern, March 11, 1841.*

“Mr. Wakley presented a petition from the Very Rev. Henry Bathurst, Archdeacon of Norwich, complaining of directions given by the Poor-Law Commissioners to Overseers to assess tithe commutation rent-charge to the full net amount without any reference to the previous proportion assessed between tithe and land, and without any notice of the liability of occupiers of land to be assessed, not only for rent, but for profits of stock in trade, and also complaining that the operation of their letter was rendered more oppressive to the clergy by a bill brought in at the heel of the last session of Parliament to suspend the liability to assessment on the part of personal property and stock in trade, and thereby to fix by law the injury offered to tithe property. The petitioner added, that he considered the result of the above Bill to be nothing less than a fraud upon the tithe proprietor, virtually changing to the disadvantage of one party the terms in

which the original contract of commutation was made, and he, therefore, prayed that, by some conciliating adjustment, this injustice might be remedied. The petition then went on to say:—‘And your petitioner in particular still further feels reluctant to submit to such injustice without remonstrance, inasmuch as the provisions of the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act contain clauses, many of them repugnant to the humanity and the feelings of a Christian country, bursting asunder the tenderest connexions of life, reducing innocent poverty to despair, disgusting to the general feelings of human nature, and the source of those bitternesses and public discontent which have broken out among the lower orders of the people within no long time past; and to remove which cause of discontent belongs to every sincere friend of social and political liberty; and most gladly, while your petitioner admits the necessity of checking fraud and imposition, such as the New Poor-Law was intended to check, would your petitioner see some milder and more effectual plan substituted, whereby facilities may be afforded to provisions for the poor, in sickness and age, derived from reasonable aid given to their own industry and economy, the legitimate, though aid-requiring, basis of their provision and independence, instead of making, as it were, a fresh Bill, now proposed, to be ‘a little finger bigger than the father’s loins,’ in reply to remonstrances which the framers thereof themselves have caused. And your petitioner, &c.’—*House of Commons*, March 10, 1841.

“Mr. Richardson, of Manchester, said, under the 43rd Elizabeth the country had flourished for 200 years; and after accumulating wealth, had come to be called the workshop of the world. And now, after being taxed to the amount of nine hundred millions, after accumulating thirty millions annually, the conclusion was that they were idle. (Hear, hear, hear.) Let the conclusion be, not that the Poor-Law must be abolished; but taxes taken off. Mr. Richardson subsequently proceeded to read an extract from the Rev. Mr. Malthus, the founder of the sect to which Lord Brougham belonged, to the effect, that all attempts to make food and capital keep pace with population were useless, and that all endeavours should be directed to keeping population within bounds. That if poor men get married, they ought not to beget children until their means

were sufficient for their support. And that it was out of the power of any Government to change the physical condition of the people. This was the new system of political economy which Mr. Roebuck, Mr. Hume, Lord John Russell, Lord Radnor, and other reformers so eulogized, and Miss Martineau, a female! Mr. Richardson found that the doctrine he had cited was in opposition to the command in Scripture, ‘Go forth and multiply.’ The regulation in the workhouse was not separation; but *classification*! The object was equally to prevent population. The speaker also contrasted Christ’s answer to the Pharisees, ‘Let no man sunder whom God hath joined,’ with the regulation of the Commissioners, and thence deduced that regulation to be blasphemous. He related a case of extraordinary cruelty, of a poor widow in Avershaw, who had once been in affluence. She was a cripple, and could not obtain enough to support her children. Under the old law she had obtained 5s. Under the new law the allowance was reduced to 3s.; further to 2s.; and under the authority of the Commissioners it was cut off altogether. That was not all. She went to beg relief for her starving children, and she was told that she had been wealthy, and that had she not been profligate and improvident, she might have saved. (Hear, hear.) She went to the chairman of the Board, a reverend member of the Established Church, to beg a shilling, and he slammed the door in her face, and told her to go away and not bother him. She could not brook the insult; but went, on Christmas-eve, and flung herself into a pond in the parson’s garden. (A strong impression was produced on the meeting by this awful story.) It was on the very land which had belonged to the poor, and of which they had been robbed by Lord John Russell’s ancestor, the Duke of Bedford. It happened beneath the walls of Woburn Abbey. (Hear, hear.) The Bill was unconstitutional, and the orders of the Commissioners might be legally opposed, if not written according to the letter of the law. If any one proposed to take their wives away, or prevent their egress, they were justified in knocking him down, as it was unconstitutional to imprison a man without an offence committed, or to separate man and wife. Let them elect overseers opposed to the law, and pass a vote of indemnity for any fines that the overseers might incur. If they were compelled to



elect Guardians, let them elect men opposed to the law. The speaker contended that the measure did not succeed in the agricultural districts. A great boast had been made of Chorlton-upon-Medlock Union; but there the Guardians wanted to get rid of it now. It was said, that no out-door relief would be given except by way of loan. Suppose they received 5s., 10s., or 20s. As soon as they got work again, a note would be sent to their employers for the amount, and if the master refused or neglected to pay it out of their wages, they would be sent to prison for three months. That was an interference with the contract for labour, with the law of debtor and creditor, but was the only condition in these districts of out-door relief. He had been to Macclesfield. The workhouse wall there was formerly six or seven feet high; it was now twenty feet, topped with broken glass. There was formerly a large gate; now there was a little door, with a porter, by the way of a gaoler. When an applicant was admitted, he was sent to the probationary ward; he was washed, scrubbed, and his hair cut; and he was put to bed, without supper. In the morning he was sent two hours to the mill. Some breakfast was then given him, and he was sent about his business. He also found fault with the diet, as scanty, and measured out as it were by spoonsful. In short, he stamped the whole proceeding as cruel. He had published the whole of what he now asserted in the London papers."—*Stockport Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, Feb. 1, 1838.

"It was to the principle, the root of the law, that he (Mr. O.) wanted to lay the axe. (Renewed cheers.) He had, upon its earliest introduction into Parliament, prophesied, that if such a measure were attempted to be carried into effect, it would lead not only to the destruction of property, but eventually to the overthrow of the Throne. (Hear.) He had often said, that the law never could be enforced without a rural police, and the latter had been recently sanctioned by Parliament, and as surely (if our governors persisted in enforcing the New Poor-Law) would the former predictions be realized. (Hear, hear.) The expense of the police too would be paid out of the land, so that the condition of the labourer, which had been already reduced to the very lowest state, was even yet to be made worse. One-half the property would soon be spent in defending the

other from the attacks of the plundered peasantry. (Hear, hear.) It was to prevent the invasion of any man's *right* that he had opposed the New Poor-Law, and he had done so on the soundest principles of political economy, sanctioned by the word of God. The great truth which he wished to impress upon their minds was, if the rich have a right by law to deprive the poor of their *rights*, then the poor will most assuredly call to their aid the law of nature, and assert their *right* to live by force. The greatest constitutional authorities are all agreed upon this point. He had many extracts in proof of this assertion with him from Puffendorf, Grotius, Bacon, Noyes, Hale, Blackstone, Paley, and others. He had, however, occupied their attention already too long, and would now content himself by mentioning the names of those learned men, who, one and all, agreed in the view which he had taken, in reference to the *right* of the poor to live. This *right* (Mr. Oastler continued) is the only safe foundation on which the institution of private property can rest with security—destroy that *right*, and very soon, despite police and soldiers, your title-deeds will be only waste paper—your homes will no longer be sacred—society will be disorganized—anarchy and confusion will overspread the face of England! (Mr. O. sat down amidst loud and repeated cheers.)"—*Mr. Oastler's Speech at the Southwark Election*, Jan., 1840.

"Neither Lords, nor Commons, nor King, no, nor the whole legislature together, are to be considered as possessing the power to enslave the people of this country; they might, separately or unitedly, do such acts as might justify resistance from the people. Is this doctrine false? Is it necessary to urge any argument to support its truth? It is a doctrine which I have learned from my early youth. I have been taught it, not only by Sidney and by Locke, but by Sir George Saville and the late Earl of Chatham. If there were no authority to support it, I would maintain it myself. I trust, however, that the spirit, the energy, the vigour of the English character, is not to be depressed, and that there will be always found in this country men bold enough to assert, ay, and to maintain also, that King, Lords, and Commons, uniting to compose a legislature, may so conduct themselves, as to justify resistance on the part of the people."—*C. J. Fox*.

"'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,  
 Though link'd among a fetter'd race,  
 To feel at least a patriot's shame.  
 Must *we* but weep o'er days more bless'd?  
 Must *we* but blush?—Our fathers bled.  
 Earth! render back from out thy breast  
 A remnant of our 'British' dead!  
 Of our noble sires, oh! grant a few,  
 To shame the base Malthusian crew."

DON JUAN, SENIOR, altered by DON JUAN, JUNIOR.

What a precious tyranny this New Poor-Law is! What a tyranny on the poor, its victims! What a tyranny on the rate-payers, its dupes! What a tyranny on the Guardians, its slaves—its tools—its scape-billies, and its stalking nags! The poor of England used to have a famous *bunch of fives* at the ends of their arms: how is it that they quietly submit to be tested, skillied, black-holed, dead-housed, and done for! The rate-payers of the land of Hampden and Sydney were not wont, in days gone by, to be bound hand and foot, and robbed, with a Somerset-house "d—n your eyes, your money and your liberties:" how is it they have so tamely surrendered their right to do what they liked with their own? The Guardians—oh, if they but could see themselves as others see them!—what poor, paltry figures of ill-fame they cut, as the shoon-suckers of the Somerset-house slaughter-house, they would silently sink with very shame, up to their long, dirty ears, in the neighbouring sinks and sewers—or, if such receptacles for filth were not convenient, buy the necessary quantum of tenpenny cord, and choke themselves, and get rid of their meanness and their misery? Poor, unfortunate, reprehensible devils! King Lewis's, King Nicholl's, King Satan's, and the Grand Vizier Chadwick's, most obedient humble servants of all-work to command—their most worthy and respectful, trembling, terrified, stinking turnspits—Ods manhood and meacocks! why don't the sorry subalterns extinguish the stench of their existence, so that Old England may *smell wholesome again?*.....The other day I was sojourning for my health at T—by, a little watering-place in South Wales. Among many others who were also there, luxuriating in bathing-machines, sailing-boats, and light boots, and in sea breezes, and little flock beds in little bird-cage closets, was a rather remarkable young lady. This young lady

had rather a wide mouth, but very pretty withal, and the better for kissing my dear; her long ringlets were seldom curled, but flew, like goldfinches (for they were of flaxen hue) about her cheeks, as the winds of Heaven pleased, and after the natural and pleasing manner which Moore makes Nora Creina's petticoats fly. Altogether she was, in flounce and figure, extremely prepossessing—though in such a far off spot, among sea-weeds, steep rocks, and granny-gran shells,—

I guess 'twas fright some there to see  
 A lady so richly clad as she,  
 Beautiful exceedingly!

Well, this young lady of the "ribbed sea sand," had very peculiar notions on certain subjects, very much so indeed. She was constantly fearing and apprehensive that gentlemen, lords, dukes, counts, or noble princes (German, of course), had designs on her person, and would come to woo and win her, unknown to her maternal guardian, to whom, it appeared, she cherished a great respect; and well she might, for the old lady, her mother, was a tremendous terror to all evil-doers in the *amo amas* line, and made it a custom every night, in co-partnership with a baker's batch of bread, to take half-a-pint of yeast, in order to enable her to rise early in the morning, that she might detect and prevent, if possible, any assignations or flirtings which might be coming off at that period. But to return to her daughter. If a beau happened to take her hand to dance at the Ceremony's (*subaudi* Master of) ball, she would, in the most artless and bewitching manner imaginable, burst into a gush of tears, and, dropping her diamonds and Bristol stones from her sweet eyes' languish, sob out, "Oh, Sir, *you must ask Mamma!*" And one day, whilst entangled amid the rocks, and most unmercifully drenched with the oncoming surf, she almost petrified the jacket and trowsers who gallantly volunteered to rescue her from her peril—



ous situation, and who, by token, had not the most distant idea of turning himself into a bottle of ginger beer and popping—she almost petrified him, the said sailor's vestments, I repeat, as, after he had lifted her down, she turned to him with tearful eyes, and blushing cheeks, and protested, "*Oh, if it is come to this, you must, indeed, ask Mamma. I could not,*" &c., &c.

The Guardians who hold office under the New Poor-Law possess just as much volition as this sea-side heroine; they dare do nothing—grant nothing—without first asking their mammas at Somerset-house. And who are these Somerset-house mammas? Fine fellows certainly—extremely so! Would you like to see a specimen brick of Somerset-house? Mr. Assistant-Commissioner M—— has gone his western circuit; he has arrived at H——, and, according to his general custom, proceeds to take his ease at his inn, and change the "guinea a-day, besides travelling expenses," which his grateful country allows him, into sundry tumblers and glasses of port, champagne, sherry, brandy, rum, gin, porter, and beer. In this instance, I learn from Boniface, he did his spiriting anything but gently; and when it was time for him to attend the local Board, he found himself *not exactly* capacitated so to do. But he must go: what a nuisance! But how could he? people were so censorious—so apt to take in vain the characters of them, the humane and patriotic Poor-Law Commissioners for England and Wales, that it would be rather a dangerous expedition, under existing circumstances; for our Assistant could not but acknowledge to himself that, like the man who "died o' Wednesday" in his shoes, he had taken a drop too much. How could he go and face the H—— Board? His fertile genius hit upon an expedient—a plan to hide the "deep damnation of his taking off" so many glasses at a sitting from coming to the ears of the authors of "rascally publications!" Commissioners are very cunning fellows, but sometimes they are worsted at their own weapons. In the present instance it was so. The perpetration of that carouse *did* come to my knowledge. They (the Commissioners) have, for some time past, *set spies* to watch my proceedings, and to report progress: they have even *intercepted my letters passing through the post*, and had a bird's-eye view of their contents—*letters connected with the publication of this very work*,

and, therefore, I have thought it but fair to return the compliment, and have lately engaged, at considerable cost, and now keep in pay at all the inns and public-houses (and they are legion) at which they put up when tramping, lookers-on to tell me all about their *res gestæ*—about their frequent freedoms with bottles and barmaids—with milliners, and other people's door-knockers and bell-handles. Nothing escapes my observation, therefore, *via* my agents. But to return to the Assistant lickspittle with whom we have now to do. With unsteady step and unremitted hiccough (although it was only eleven o'clock forenoon), he issued from his caravansary, and by dint of handling walls and shop-windows, managed to wade his way to the H—— Union-house. When he entered the court of that place of death, as might have been expected, several Guardians were sauntering about waiting his coming, and each vieing with the other, to have the *honour* of kissing his—feet. As he drew near, they smiled, and were, in the obsequious manner which Guardians so like to exhibit to their superior officers, about to congratulate him, with touched tiles and bended hams, on the excellence of my host's tap—when he (our brave Assistant-Commissioner) wrinkling and puckering up his countenance, like an old lady's petticoat in getting over a stile, and none to help her—or like a young lady's bonnet and ribbons when a gallant dear fellow would do so, naughty man! and ought to be ashamed of himself—he (our never-to-be too-often-designated brave Assistant-Commissioner), his face suffused with deep red redness, and his head which now, from the potency of his potatoes,

Hung on his shoulders like the moon,  
whose orb

Thro' optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
At ev'ning from the top of Fesole,

commenced, as if in excruciating pain,  
"*Oh, gentlemen, I can't come any further—I can't come on—I have broken my leg—Oh! oh! Please pull it down, one leg is got shorter than the other—Oh! oh!*"

So much for the New Poor-Law—for its people and their perpetrations. Noblemen, gentlemen, landlords, merchants, clergy, tradesmen, and yeomen of Old England, are you guilty or not guilty for supporting such a system—yes or no, upon your honours?—*G. R. Wythen Baxter*, May 15, 1841.

"TO THE BOARD OF GUARDIANS OF THE KETTERING UNION.

"GENTLEMEN,—I beg to enclose for your information a copy of a letter transmitted to me through Mr. Weale (the Assistant-Commissioner) from the Poor-Law Commissioners, in reply to certain queries which I addressed to that gentleman. After reading this communication, you will probably agree with me in the view I take of the relative position of ourselves as Guardians, and the Relieving Officers hitherto supposed to be acting under our directions. It clearly appears that the Relieving Officers have an authority independent of and superior to ours, an authority which, in the opinion of the Commissioners, they are bound to exercise, and which they may exercise with impunity. The auditor has an independent jurisdiction likewise paramount over all parties, the Commissioners themselves of course being excepted. It further appears from the same letter, that the discretionary power which the Commissioners profess to leave in our hands of giving out-door relief in 'cases of urgent necessity' is a mere nullity, for it is now said, not only that the Relieving Officer is the ultimate judge of what is and what is not urgent necessity, but in order to shut the door still more closely against all benevolent interference on the part of the Guardians, all cases arising from any sudden deficiency of work, from the exigencies of a large family above the age of seven, or from the wickedness of a husband in deserting his wife and children, are declared to be of that class in which the workhouse is the only alternative. From what contingency then any case of urgent necessity can arise, it would be difficult, I think, for any but a Somerset-house Commissioner to guess. Cases of accident or illness, or the first six months of widowhood, were open to relief before the last rules were sent down to us, and therefore have nothing to do with my present argument. I rejoice to think that the stern decree of the Poor-Law Commissioners has been already more than once disregarded by the Kettering Guardians, and that one of the last acts of my official existence at the Board was to concur in an order of out-door relief to a poor woman of my own parish, who, according to the doctrine of the Commissioners, ought to have been sent away with the brief reply, 'House offered.' This, however, was done before the intention of the Commissioners was so plainly laid down

as it now is, and while we still entertained a faint hope that some loophole would be left through which humanity might creep in. Under the New Poor-Law, any rule sent from Somerset-house has the same authority with an Act of Parliament; we have therefore, as it seems to me, no choice left, but either openly to act in contradiction of the law, or escape its penalties by evasion (thus making a sort of compromise between our conscience and our humanity), or carry it out in its full rigour, or decline acting as Guardians altogether. For myself, I prefer adopting the latter alternative; and though I regret that it will no longer be in my power to assist in carrying into execution a law which, if kindly and judiciously administered, might, I believe, have been a blessing to the country, I must at once resign my seat as chairman of your Board, rather than, under the pretended name of Guardian, be converted, contrary to my will, into an oppressor. My fellow-Guardians will not, I believe, be indisposed to allow that I have never flinched from making the idle and dissolute feel the severities of the law; but to visit with its penalties those who are anxious, as far as Providence will allow them, to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, but who, from the vicissitudes of trade or agriculture, are unable for a short season, perhaps, to get their own living; or those who, under the bad system of the old law, have been encouraged to make improvident marriages, and thus burden themselves with large families; or those who may have been left destitute through the wickedness of their natural protectors—to force such unoffending persons into the workhouse, is a system to which I will never be a party. Such persons have, I conceive, a moral right to be assisted out of the rates, and as the property we may any of us happen to possess was purchased either by ourselves or our predecessors, subject to such deductions, and therefore was valued accordingly, I should as soon think of striving to avoid, under colour of law, the relief of those who are paupers by necessity, and not by choice, as I should of evading any other payment to which my estate may be legally subject—such, for instance, as the rate laid upon it from time immemorial for the support of the national worship of God, or any charge which a former proprietor may have burdened it with for the maintenance of a Dissenting chapel.

"Strictly speaking, I must still be



considered the chairman of your Board till the expiration of the current year, but it may be a convenience to the vice-chairmen and other members of the Board to know, that I shall not again be present at your meetings. I cannot take my leave of you without expressing my sincere thanks for the kindness which I have invariably received at your hands, during the three years that I have been the chairman of your Board, for the valuable assistance rendered me by all those who usually attend, and especially the two gentlemen who are vice-chairmen; nor can I forbear from testifying to the judgment with which you have applied yourselves to the just management of the public funds, and the humanity with which you have ever listened to the claims and necessities of the poor. These circumstances, however, only prove how unnecessary and injudicious is the interference of the Commissioners, and therefore how important it is to protest against the rigour of their system. I am, Gentlemen, with great respect, your faithful servant,

“GEORGE S. ROBINSON.

“Cranford, Oct. 10.”

Letter from the Poor-Law Commissioners to R. Weale, Esq., Assistant-Commissioner, transmitted by him to Sir George Robinson, and referred to above.

“Poor-Law Commission-office,

“October 7, 1839.

“SIR,—The Poor-Law Commissioners have had under consideration the letter which you have forwarded to them from the Rev. Sir George Robinson, chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Kettering Union. In reference to the inquiries made therein they desire to state—

“1. That if a Relieving Officer shall refuse to carry into effect an illegal order of the Board of Guardians, the Commissioners would feel it their duty not to dismiss him or permit him to be dismissed on account of such refusal; and they are further of opinion, that he might compel the Guardians, by legal proceedings, to pay his salary.

“2. The auditor may disallow any illegal payment made by the Relieving Officer, notwithstanding such payment may have been made by the direction of the Guardians, and the Relieving Officer would have to bear the loss of such disallowance.

“3. The Commissioners concur with you in thinking that insufficiency of wages,

want of employment, or number of family, do not of themselves render the case of an applicant one of urgent necessity, and they think that such would be the opinion of the auditor, who would ultimately have to decide whether the relief given under that exception was or was not legally given. By order of the Board,

“E. CHADWICK, Secretary.”

“*The New Poor-Law was the result of a bargain between the landlords and the factory masters.* This fact explains the reason why all the great parties in the state supported it. Yes, my lord, they two, having resolved to destroy the labourers, rather than yield a fraction of their own property to the support of the state, were resolved to obliterate the *title-deed* of the English labourers! To deliver their children up into the jaws of the factory monster! and ‘to force them to live on a coarser sort of food!’ In fact, they determined to establish the principle, ‘that Christianity should no longer be part and parcel of the law of England!’ For this deed of blood and of infidelity, like their great prototypes, HEROD and PONTIUS PILATE, the landlords and factory masters ‘were made friends together, who before were at enmity between themselves.’ The LANDLORDS wished to rob the poor, by adding the poor-rates to their rentals! the FACTORY MASTERS, having worked up the stock of little children in their own districts, as well as those which they could procure by stealth from the London and other workhouses, required *the children of the agricultural labourers to be worked up in their accursed murderous system.* My lord, horrible as this statement may sound, IT IS THE TRUTH! The tyrants, for those unhallowed purposes, joined their bloody hands, and ‘were made friends together!’ Then, political and religious partisanship were dormant! the storm of political strife was hushed! religious bigotry and liberal latitudinarianism slumbered on the same couch! Whig, Tory, and Radical—Papist, Churchman, Independent, Methodist, and Socinian, all drowned their animosity in that bloody contract, and ‘the same day were made friends together!’ So degraded were the landlords, that, in order to effect this robbery and murder of the poor, the descendants of the high and mighty, the proud and chivalrous barons of England, actually consented to pass an act of Parliament, which has exalted above the law (in order to enable them to rob and mur-

der the poor by the law) a mean, low-bred, unfeeling plebeian, who once sold his own bastard, with £40 to the parish officers—a wretch, who, when his father was *in want*, and applied to this graceless son for relief, received an answer to the following effect:—‘*I owe you nothing—you begat me, and you could not help it.*’ My lord, it is true that this monster has, by the New Poor-Law, been elevated over the heads of the aristocracy and of the Crown! That he is now the law-maker for England, it is true that, under his infernal sway, the nobles do not blush to serve! My lord, it was natural that I, ‘the king of the factory children,’ should resist the enactment of that Bill, which was granted as a blood-bonus to the factory masters, on condition that they would sanction the robbery of the agricultural labourers! I did so; I became ‘an Anti-Poor-Law agitator.’ Beginning at Apsley-house, my lord, I have entered every door. I have used every means which God has given me, to prevent the *passing* or the *enforcement* of that law; and, by the help of my God, *I will continue to do so, to the close of my life.* The migration part of the system—the *buying* and *selling* of the agricultural children to the factory monster, I have, without the aid of Parliament, annihilated; and, by the blessing of God, the whole of the Devil’s own law, shall soon be erased from the statute-book of this, so-called Christian land.”—*Oastler’s Letter to the Marquis of Normanby*, Jan. 26, 1840.

“Mr. Whyte said,—Gentlemen, of the existing act, my opinion has always been, and I have never studied to conceal it, that it is most un-English, unconstitutional, arbitrary, and cruel; and the Bill of Lord John Russell, now before Parliament, is only worse and worse. (Cheers.) The clauses in the original Bill liable, I think, to the greatest objections, are those which prohibit the Board of Guardians, under any circumstances, from giving relief to able-bodied paupers without bringing them into the house; let the peculiarities of the case be what they may we have no option—they must come into the house, for they cannot have relief elsewhere. The next is the Bastardy-clause, which I think a very disgrace to the statute-book. The Bill of Lord John Russell confirms the clauses which will not permit us to relieve able-bodied paupers under any circumstances except in the house, notwithstanding all the petitions which the people have poured in

against them. The new bill, in addition, contains a clause which authorizes the formation of boards of management, which are empowered to raise more money to build houses (as though there were not enough already) in the central part of a district or county comprising several Unions, and to these houses all the old and infirm from the several Unions are to be sent. This is most cruel and oppressive. Here, if our old and infirm poor are obliged to go into the house, they go with some degree of pleasure, because they have occasionally opportunities of seeing their relatives and friends, and to them they can communicate if they have any ill-usage to complain of, and they can report it to those who have the means of inquiring into and correcting it; but if the poor creatures are to be sent away to a remote part of the county, how is it possible that their relatives or friends can ever go to see them?—so that, suffer what they may, their condition is hopeless. In addition to this, there is not only the expense of these new houses, but all the various places to be filled up: they must have governors, and matrons, and porters, and God knew what besides. And then, there is another clause which authorizes yet other boards of management to be formed, and other houses built, and other sets of governors and officers to be employed, and to these houses all the boys and girls of the poor, under 16 years of age, are to be sent for what they call education; they are to be marched off from their fathers and mothers, and sent to these Central houses. And what will they be good for when they come out? Why, the boys will do for nothing but for fine gentlemen, and fine gentlemen without a farthing to live upon. (A laugh.) And what will become of the girls? They will be kept shut up in these houses during the years in which they ought to be fitting themselves for useful life, and come out at last to be useless members and mere burdens on society. Again, there is the eighth, a most objectionable clause, to empower Boards of Guardians to purchase burial-grounds for the interment of the remains of those unfortunate paupers who may happen to die in the house: to these grounds they are to be carried, away from the church, away from their friends, to be buried privately.”—*Barnstaple Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, March 1, 1841. [This is the Magistrate of whom Mr. Bucke spoke in the House of Commons, February 8, 1841, as having been put under arrest by



an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner for presiding at an Anti-Poor-Law Meeting which had previously been held at Barnstaple. G. R. W. B.]

“Mr. March said, there were many persons who professed that they were in favour of the principle of the Bill, but objected to its details, or to the way in which it was carried out. He recollected that some time ago he met with a gentleman at the Union-house who talked in this strain, and he replied, ‘I confess I do not understand you; will you explain yourself? What do you mean by the principle of the Bill?’ His friend looked confused, and, after a little hesitation, confessed, that he did not know what it was. He had never met with any one who would avow what the principle of the Bill really was. Its advocates and supporters had not the hardihood to admit it, but he believed, if the Bill had any principle, it was this—that relief to the poor should be made as difficult and inaccessible as possible; and he had no doubt that its ultimate intention was, however carefully and speciously it might be disguised, to do away with relief to the poor altogether. Some theorists might think this practicable; indeed, many years ago he himself was of opinion, that by a judicious system of management the poor might be enabled to provide for themselves in sickness and old age, and the Poor-Laws be entirely abolished. But after an experience of more than 20 years, he no longer dreamt of it; for he was perfectly satisfied that, in the existing state of society, the discontinuance of Poor-Laws was utterly impracticable. The subject of Poor-Laws, he was glad to say, had attracted the attention of many eminent medical and scientific men. He had lately read a little work, written by Dr. Alison, on the state of the poor of Scotland. There, let it be observed, they had no Poor-Laws; and notwithstanding the moral and intellectual character of the people, Scotland appeared to be the most wretched country in the world. Thousands of the poor had only three meals a-week to subsist upon; their miserable hovels had no bed, no furniture; they lie down in their clothes, and pine away in destitution, until by-and-by the extremity of their filth and wretchedness produces fever and other diseases; these proceed in their devastating progress until they reach the abodes of the rich, and when they themselves begin to suffer, their sympathies are awakened to the sufferings of the poor around them, and they afford

them relief, and the disease is checked for a season; but when personal danger is over and forgotten, then the rich steel their hearts and shut their ears until the same unhappy result ensues, and they are driven again to the exercise of charity in self-preservation. Lord John Russell, and those who supported him, were ignorant of the subject they legislated upon; if they had had a hundredth part of the experience in the management of the poor which he (Mr. March) had had, they would relinquish their crude and ridiculous notions. His lordship had pointed out that book (the report of the Commissioners) as his guide and text-book; with such a guide he did not wonder that his legislation was most erroneous, for he (Mr. March) had read many of those reports, and greater absurdities he had never in his life met with; no, nor greater falsehoods. As to his neighbourhood, in the account which the Commissioners gave, from beginning to end, there was not one single statement which was strictly true; and yet these falsehoods were employed as the data for legislation, and the lives and comforts of the poor were made to depend upon them! The books, to him, were utterly incomprehensible, and a gentleman who acted as a Guardian, and was a banker, and as good an accountant as any in the town, had told him, in reference to the complication of the accounts, ‘I do not understand the accounts, although I have paid great attention to them; and, if I don’t, I am sure no one else at the Board does.’ And this was the system which was to supersede the plain and simple accounts under the old Law; he declared one might as well try to decipher the hieroglyphics on the Egyptian columns as attempt to understand it. He scarcely knew what other part of the Poor-Laws first to advert to; for where all was so objectionable it was difficult to fix upon a point. The whole system was most withering to the feelings of the poor, and showed them that relief was most grudgingly afforded. If they applied for relief, they were brought in and placed upon a raised platform like criminals, and subjected to all the questions and cross-questions which the chairman and the Board chose to put to them. Here one Guardian would ask, ‘Don’t you get drunk sometimes?’ and another, ‘Don’t you keep a gambling-house?’ and a third, ‘How much do you spend in tobacco?’ He recollected an instance of this sort which his friend Mr. Mortimer had told him of. A poor old fellow from

Bratton Fleming came before the Board, 73 years of age, and after he had been severely questioned by the Chairman, a Guardian got up with much self-complacency and asked him, 'How much do you spend a-week in tobacco?' The old man answered, 'Why 3d., and 2d. of it go'th for duty,' and looking archly at the Board he added, 'so, 'tis but a penny arter all.' He had been asked why he did not bring a charge before the Board, when facts of ill-treatment had come to his knowledge? He knew better than to bring a charge before a judge and jury whose verdict was always predetermined. Mr. March went on at considerable length to comment upon the workhouse discipline; noticed that it was a crime in the house to drink tea, and the exultation with which the master brought some empty teapots before the Board one morning as an important capture which he had made under the beds and upon the persons of two or three female inmates; that when the law was first before Parliament, he had confidence in its originators, from their great professions of respect for the liberty and rights of the subject, and that it would be a useful and humane measure; but how great was his mortification and disgust when the Assistant-Commissioner came into this neighbourhood to put the Act in force; that the cold and exposure to which the poor were subjected, when they were dragged into the town to undergo examination before the Commissioner, had issued in the death of many of them; and several other points he noticed in which we have neither time nor space to follow him."—*Barnstaple Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, March 1, 1841.

"Mr. Fielden presented a petition from Hannah Ingeg, of Chesterton, Cambridge, complaining of the conduct of the Earl of Hardwicke and other Guardians of the poor of the Caxton and Accrington Union, towards her husband and family, and representing that her husband had been deprived of his home by being shut up in the Union-house, while the whole of her children had caught the itch in the same place, and that, finally, the whole family had been cast out to wander about in a starving condition, without house or home;—from Mr. William Rowcliffe, Churchwarden of Runnington, Somerset, representing, that before the New Poor-Law came into operation in his parish, the annual average amount of poor-rates was £31, whereas since the adoption of the

New Law it had amounted to £49 4s. 6d.; and that no content or happiness will be known in England until the New Law is repealed;—from Mr. Cadogan Williams, of Newcastle-Bridgend, Glamorganshire, representing the great hardship of the New Poor-Law, under which poor persons are not to be relieved, except under the condition of going into the Union-house, there to be separated from their wives and children, a regulation that has lately been introduced among his neighbours, who feel shocked at its cruelty and impiety; representing also, that persons reason too rigidly with regard to the poor, for that others in a higher sphere are paid without performing service, and praying that the law may be modified;—from twenty Guardians of the poor of the Union of Carmarthen (being a large majority of the Board), three of them justices of the peace, representing that they have carefully observed the working of the New Law since they have been Guardians, and that they are satisfied that conceding to them the discretion of allowing out-door relief to all classes of paupers, whether adult or infant, would be beneficial; also, that the Bastardy clause of the New Law is cruel and directly opposed to justice and Christianity; and entreating the House to amend the law in these respects; from fifty-one persons of the parish of Aldershot, Hampshire, being artisans, mechanics, and labourers, members of a benefit society, representing that they view with alarm the bad feeling which has been caused by the introduction of the New Law, and expressing their fears that the members of the House of Commons do not know the condition of the poor, the privations they endure, and the temptations under which they consequently labour; that crime is to be attributed to poverty, and not to innate dishonesty, and praying that the rights of the poor may be established by the restoration of the 43d of Elizabeth;—from the members of a benefit society at Seal, in the county of Surrey, signed by eighty-three mechanics and labourers, representing that the poverty of the labouring classes is the cause of their committing crime, and therefore aggravates that cause; and praying that the 43d of Elizabeth may be restored;—from 860 mechanics and labourers of the parishes of Guestling, Icklesham, Fairlight, Bechley, Westfield, and Brade, in the county of Sussex, expressing their indignation at the cruelty practised under the New Poor-Law upon



their classes, by which poverty is treated as a crime, and praying the House of Commons to unite with the other House of Parliament in passing a law more humane than the present, by which the poor of England are treated worse than the black slaves of the West Indies;—from 872 inhabitants of Radcliffe, Lancashire, condemning the New Poor-Law, and praying the House not to renew the powers of the Commissioners;—from the inhabitants of St. Mary's Newington, in vestry assembled, a petition signed by Mr. H. Hearsee, Chairman, representing the evils arising from the system of plural and proxy voting established under the New Poor-Law, the enormous cost of the New Law, and praying the House to give no further power to the Commissioners, but rather to repeal the law altogether, and suffer the parish to manage its own affairs;—from Llanndysell, Llangyullo, Bangor, and other places in the county of Cardigan, signed by 203 clergymen, gentry, dissenting ministers, farmers, and other rate-payers, expressing their indignation at the unchristian and unconstitutional practices put in force under the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act, and concluding with an earnest demand and prayer that the law may be forthwith repealed. The hon. member then presented a petition, signed by the inhabitants of Oldham."

The following is the portion of it which regards the New Poor-Law.

"That the New Poor-Law was passed on authority of Commissioners whose reports were so voluminous that no man could read and digest them in less than two years of diligent reading; and that several volumes, even of these reports, on which the bill was founded, were not printed for the use of members till after the bill was passed. That the provisions of the Bill itself are unconstitutional, inconvenient, and unjust; and that the powers given to Commissioners under it have been, as might be expected, acted upon in a manner so arbitrary, and so shocking to humanity, that the country ascribes to those who procured it to pass the wicked intention that the powers should be so used, but the unmanliness of shrinking from avowing it by direct enactment. That, under this law, thousands of human beings have been driven from their native homes in the south of England into the north to seek employment in manufactures, and, having worked

in disappointment, have pined to death, or wandered forth again, without home or means, outcasts on the world; and that this experiment of the Poor-Law Commissioners and hard-hearted Guardians having failed, no redress to the sufferers is offered, except the mere unblushing avowal that the scheme is a failure, and is to end.

"That, in the renewal of the Bank Charter in 1833, encouragement was held out to combinations of bankers to deluge the country with paper-money of different denominations, owing to which a false prosperity was created, ending in three years after the passing of the Act, and continuing its operation still, in ruining merchants and manufacturers, and in throwing suddenly out of work thousands of industrious workpeople, and dooming them to the 'labour test,' another invention of the experimentors under the New Poor-Law Commission.'"—July 16, 1839.

"The parish of St. Pancras had a Local Act, and that the Poor-Law Commissioners attempted to introduce their particular government by virtue of one of the clauses in the old Act. In that attempt, however, they failed. The Court of Queen's Bench held, that, when there was a Local Act, and a Board of Guardians, it was not competent to the Poor-Law Commissioners to introduce a Board of Guardians under the Amendment-Act, as distinguished from the Guardians under the Local Act. (Hear.) The parish of St. Pancras, therefore, escaped from the Poor-Law Commissioners with the dissentient opinion of one of the learned judges. He well remembered what had taken place when he left the Court, though he would not mention names. He left the Court followed by a gentleman who said, 'As you don't like to have a Board of Guardians, we will put you into a Union,' (hear, hear), upon which he (Sir F. Pollock) said, 'Sir, if you have any intention of doing that, I beg to tell you that your present remark will for ever prevent that; for in the Court of Queen's Bench, or in my place in Parliament, I will always be ready to state what I have said, and prevent you from doing indirectly what you cannot do directly.' He (Sir F. Pollock) was a parishioner, and considered that, if they were large enough to conduct their own affairs under a Board of Guardians, they did not want to be put into a Union. He dared the party to do so. Some time after the Poor-Law Commissioners had put the whole of the city of London—he

thought no fewer than 51 parishes—into one Union. He had moved in the Court of Queen's Bench to set aside that order. Many parishes, under the government of local Acts and Boards of Guardians complained of the interference of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and had said, that if they received the law as laid down at Somerset-house, many respectable persons who could live out of the workhouse with a little assistance, which the parishes were ready to afford (cheers), would be driven into the workhouse, and would, in consequence, die of shame. The Court of Queen's Bench had decided, after great deliberation, that under the 28th section the Poor-Law Commissioners had the power of forming a Union of any number of parishes they thought proper. There was no injustice in saying, that a Board of Guardians should not be imposed where one already existed; but these Boards were superseded by uniting the several parishes into Unions. What was done with reference to the Reform Bill and the Municipal Bill? In the former a clause was inserted repealing every charter, statute, and act, standing in the way of that Bill. A clause to the same effect was introduced into the Municipal Bill. Was this course adopted in the Poor-Law Bill? No; and he was not surprised at it. When the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill was passed, it was the general understanding in the House, that all Local Acts should not be interfered with, but should remain in due force. He had endeavoured to obtain some precise and exact information with reference to that declaration, and had searched in the usual channels of information—not in the newspapers of the day, but in the *Mirror of Parliament*. He had not been able to find any distinct statement that fell from Lord Althorp; but certain expressions that fell from the noble lord during the discussion, justified the House in believing that parishes, then under the control of local Acts of Parliament, and local Boards of Guardians, were not to be brought under the operation of the Poor-Law Bill, and were not to be interfered with by the Poor-Law Commissioners. It was worthy of remark, that both the Reform Bill and Municipal Bill, repealed all those Acts which stood in the way of the operation of those measures. It was never intended by Parliament, that between 300 and 400 Acts of the Legislature should exist by the sufferance and caprice of the Poor-Law Commissioners. It was ridiculous to sup-

pose that such an idea was ever contemplated. If it were the intention of the noble lord to make the House believe, that the Poor-Law Commissioners did not intend to repeal the Local Acts under which so many parishes were now governed, it was his duty to say so more explicitly, and in less ambiguous language than that contained in the third clause of the bill. It was highly important that the noble lord should, by a declamatory enactment, set the matter at rest without any delay."—*Sir F. Pollock, House of Commons*, March 26, 1841.

"Now what was the operation of that law?—what the effect on the minds and feelings of the people of that law, coming to them, as it did, under the sanction of a Liberal Administration, and proposed by a Liberal Administration? This was a case which showed how careful one ought to be in the use of terms, because he was confident that no Tory Administration could have proposed such a measure; and if it had proposed such a one, no Tory Administration could have passed it into a law. But what was the mode of rating under it? A proposition was made in the year 1808, for the first time, to give the right of plural voting. By an Act called Sturges Bourne's Act, the rate-payers occupying at £190 a-year, were to give two votes in country elections of Overseers. And what was the system of voting under the New Poor-Law? That right of voting, which had been granted to occupiers by Sturges Bourne's Act, was by the New Poor-Law transferred to owners, even to non-resident owners; so that, under the existing law, a non-resident owner could give six votes, for the very property for which the occupier gave only three votes. (Hear.) Was this a proper franchise? was this a specimen of Liberal Administration? was this what the country had a right to expect from a Reform Government? If it were, then, he said, the sooner the country got rid of them the better. ('Hear, hear,' from Colonel Sibthorp.) Surely that could not be a Liberal Government which gave its sanction to a franchise of this kind. See how it worked. He himself knew of one parish in which there were put in 1,500 votes by proxy alone. Now, however, it was proposed to alter this; and the noble lord wished that 24 should be the greatest number of votes that any one person should be allowed to give. But what was the operation of the system on the rate-payers? They were virtually



disfranchised. (Hear, hear.) They knew it; they were indignant at it. 'What use is it,' said they, 'for us to interfere in these elections? We are deprived of our right by the non-residents and their proxies.' (Hear, hear.) In consequence, then, of the operation of the law in this and other respects, and on reflecting upon these things, he could assure the House, that this class of persons had become dissatisfied, at least, at the proceedings of the House of Commons; that they had no respect for the legislature, and felt no interest in its proceedings. They said, 'It is of no use for us to petition the House of Commons; for when we do send a petition no attention is paid to it, and not one word is allowed to be spoken upon the subject of it.' In short, it was felt among the people that the proceedings of that House were adverse to popular rights, adverse to popular interests, and only calculated for the protection and advancement of the rights and interests of the rich. These were the sentiments of the persons of whom he spoke; and for himself he would say, that when he found the principles of the Poor-Law Act entirely hostile to the interests of the poor he should not do his duty, as a member of Parliament, if he did not express his opinion upon it. He said, then, that it was a coarse, cold-blooded Act—that it was based on ferocious and savage principles, and that it was calculated to lead only to the torture and grinding of the poorer classes (hear, hear); that it was calculated to make the muscle and bone of England strive against the Parliament; and he warned the House, that if they tried to carry it out fully, they would raise a spirit of resistance which nothing but force would be found effective to oppose. Was it well to pass such measures? Was it wise? He thought not. (Hear, hear.) He believed that the House had, in a great measure, been led astray, in legislating on this subject by the fabulous statements put forth by the Poor-Law Commissioners. But there was yet time to retrace their steps. The poor man, who had been toiling for 40 years, and scarcely obtaining bread for his wife and children—he, on his knees, was now appealing to that love of justice which belonged to the House—to the feelings of their hearts—to all their affections and sensibilities, and asking them, in the name of God, not to impose on him a law so savage as this. He who had supported a wife and children by so many years'

toiling, appealed to the House not to let him fall a victim to the cruelty of those who might be inclined to make his poverty the groundwork of punishment. (Cheers.) Day after day, and week after week, he (Mr. Wakley) met with many instances of this sort among the jurymen who came before him—men on whose cheek the deep wrinkles told sufficiently what sorrow and grief they had passed through. Such men would tell him, that they thought Parliament wished the people to be murdered. He (Mr. Wakley) said to them in answer, 'No; Parliament wishes to do justice to the people;' but these persons would not listen to him; they referred him to the Poor-Law, and compelled him to reflect how much of truth what they said might have in it. (Hear, hear.) He wondered if hon. members generally knew what the nature of physical toil was; did the noble lord know what it was? Well, then, let them take, by way of example, the boy of 15 years of age:—Take him (said the hon. gentleman) dragging his feet through the field, following the plough; at 21 he thinks himself a man; he can plough, mow, and reap; but every day tells him, that day after day, through life, he must toil. To-day passes, and next day comes; but throughout his life the same law operates, until at 60 he is broken down, paralyzed, rheumatized (hear, hear); and still, as his body falls away, his days become more and more oppressive, more and more wretched. He passes the doors of the workhouse, and says every time he passes, 'There it is my doom to end my days;' and, to make the matter more wretched still, there meets his eye the cemetery attached to the same workhouse, and his view is regaled, day after day, with the sods under which he is soon to repose. At last, he cannot earn, by the wages of his labour, enough to support himself and his family, and his employer, true to the principles of the political economist, says, 'I have lost by you for the last three weeks. I pay 8s. a-week to you'—bad wages in these times, the House would agree with him—'I pay you 8s. a-week; but I can do it no longer.' 'But,' says the poor man, 'I hope something may be found for me that I can do.' 'No,' says the unfeeling master. The poor man then applies to the Guardians. They say, 'Come into the house.' Says he, 'I think that if you could let me have 3s. or 4s. a-week, I could do.' They answer, 'We would be glad to do it, but the Commissioners at Somerset-house will

not allow it; they let us have no control; we have no means of upsetting their authority. We willingly would, but we cannot.' (Hear, hear). From that moment darkness and clouds overshadow that man; and from the moment he enters the portals of the workhouse, he feels that he has entered his tomb. The hon. gentleman then went on to ask, Was that the proper effect of Christian legislation? was it possible that hon. members could be aware of these things? that they could be familiar with the operation of a law of this nature, and yet vote for its continuance? No; hon. and learned members, and especially the noble lord (Lord J. Russell), could have no knowledge of the working of this monstrous system, or they would not think of supporting it."—*House of Commons*, March 8, 1841.

"If the Conservative party suffer themselves to be caught in the snare so artfully laid for them by their opponents, with reference to what we may venture to call the antagonist questions of Poor-Law continuance and Corn-Law repeal, they will prove, in the face of the world, their utter incapacity for the government of this country. It is not a temporary disadvantage, a mere trifling obstruction to their return to popularity and power, but the total annihilation of their political pretensions, which may be the result of a false step at this peculiar juncture.

"The game of Ministers has evidently been to entrap the landed interest into committing themselves irrevocably to that most unjust, despotic, and unchristian measure which they have substituted for the ancient charitably-intended system of Poor-Law relief; to carry this measure, and continue it, by their assistance; and then, when the tumult of popular indignation had begun to set in strongly against both the law and its authors, to offer compensation for its cruelties, at the expense of the same landed interest; withdrawing themselves from the storm under cover of this concession, and leaving to the Conservative party the exclusive responsibility of maintaining an oppressive Poor-Law and an unpopular Corn-Law both together.

"Had there been among the agricultural Conservatives that degree of foresight which might have been expected, they would have suspected this trick from the beginning, or, at all events, would not have failed to perceive the shadow of coming events in the words uttered by

Lord John Russell in the Corn-Law debate of 1839. 'I did hold,' said the noble lord, 'whatever might be the proper opinion with respect to the Corn-Laws, that when agricultural distress and the Poor-Laws weighed upon the landed interest with aggravated burden, it was desirable not to enter into the question with a view to the alteration of the law in a manner which might aggravate the distresses already existing; *but now, when the burden has been much diminished since the enactment of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, that is one of the reasons which induce me to believe that the question may be now fairly entered upon.*' Surely this ought to have satisfied the men who, while they considered the maintenance of the Corn-Laws indispensable to the landed interest, eagerly seconded every proposition, however unconstitutional, which could tend to diminish the amount of poor-rates—this language, we say, ought to have satisfied them that they were pursuing a penny-wise and pound-foolish policy, and assisting both to mask and to fortify a battery against themselves.

"And so, in the event, it has proved. The administration of the Poor-Laws has been placed in the hands of individuals notoriously unfavourable to the Corn-Laws, and they have taken care to work their instrument well. They have created a deep sense of oppression, they have exasperated the people, on purpose to offer a vent to that exasperation, a pretended remedy to that oppression, in an attack upon the Corn-Laws. They have curtailed the measure of relief afforded to the poor, by every cruel and unjustifiable device which political economy could suggest; and just as the landed proprietor began to count his gains, and to felicitate himself upon a reduction of his burdens to the amount of 40 or 50 per cent., they interpose with a proposition intended to make him disgorge the ill-gotten pelf, and share his profit with the manufacturer and the merchant.

"For our own part, we honestly declare that, although we see a good deal of *finesse*, we see no particular injustice, in this. We think, as we have always said, that an alteration of the present Corn-Laws, effected by peaceable and constitutional means, and adjusted with due consideration for the interests of the agricultural as well as the manufacturing poor, would be a national benefit; not,



indeed, so great a benefit, especially to the working classes, as empyrical agitators pretend, but still a benefit. And if the New Poor-Law, that enormous public fraud, is still to be administered so as greatly to retrench the sums of money formerly appropriated to the relief of the poor, we cannot understand on what principle of reason one class only should be permitted to monopolize the benefit of such a retrenchment. We assent, therefore, to the proposition, that the present Poor-Law and the present Corn-Law cannot stand together: we think that either both or one of them must be greatly altered or repealed.

"It becomes, then, important to consider, with respect to those measures, the actual position of the two great political parties. In the first place, we observe that neither of them is prepared to abandon both these laws; the Whigs take their stand upon the Poor-Law, and propose to give fresh harshness to all its odious features, to persevere in its present mode of administration, to enlarge the powers of the Commissioners to whom that administration is intrusted, to fix it without mitigation for ever on the country; while the Conservatives, with equal pertinacity, reject, as a party, every overture for the alteration of the Corn-Laws. This is the actual state of things; we may regret it, but such it is.

"The people, therefore (assuming the people to be, like ourselves, dissatisfied with the present state of the law upon both these subjects), know that they cannot expect to have their views on both points seconded by either the Whig or the Conservative party. At the best they will have to choose between one party offering them a change in the Corn-Laws without Poor-Law reform, and another party offering them Poor-Law reform without a change in the Corn-Laws. Which, therefore, if this is to be the alternative, will be their choice?

"No reasonable man, with a common share of humanity, can hesitate in such a case. Whether he regards the certainty or the nature, the nearness or the magnitude, of the evil to be redressed; or the safety, the facility, or the efficacy of the remedy, his decision must be the same. On the side of the Poor-Law there is gross, direct oppression; not a deprivation of good, but a positive infliction of evil, upon the poor; not a mere continuation of a faulty, established system, but a despotic innovation of six years'

date; not a question of complicated relations and remote influences, in which it is difficult to trace with certainty the connexion of cause and effect, but one in which the whole machinery and working of the system is broadly displayed before the public eye. Again, any alteration of the Poor-Law upon which the Conservative party might resolve would be brought forward *bonâ fide*, would be carried with ease through both Houses of Parliament, would be universally approved in every part of the country, and by all classes of the people, except those few miserable Whigs and political economists, who would grumble over it in silence.

"The Corn-Law, on the other hand, is neither an acute, nor a novel, nor a pressing grievance. It is a very complicated commercial question, of which those who have considered it most think the practical importance much overrated. It is a grievance pressing far more upon the rich manufacturing and commercial interests than upon the poor, and any considerable change in it, if suddenly made, will have a tendency to produce new distress, instead of removing that which already exists among the agricultural poor. In the debate of 1840, Lord John Russell justly stated, that 'the evil caused by this law had been much exaggerated,' and would continue (though in a less degree), even after the law should be altered; and Mr. Muntz, the radical member for Birmingham, observed, that 'after much reflection he had come to the conclusion, that the repeal of the Corn-Laws would not effect all the good which some seem willing to suppose. He considered (referring to facts in support of his opinion), that if the Corn-Law were repealed, the rate of wages, the rent of land, and the price of corn, would be all reduced to the continental level;' and that, 'if, by the infliction of a heavy blow upon the landed interest, 'the home trade were destroyed, the increase in the foreign demand would not make up for the loss.' Again, if tried by the sound and statesmanlike principles then laid down by Lord John Russell, it will be evident that the ministerial proposition now made for the alteration of the Corn-Laws is not *bonâ fide*, but hollow and insincere; the noble lord having stated, in the passage which we quoted yesterday, that for the Government to introduce any measure upon this subject in the face of an adverse majority, and under circum-

stances likely to create excitement, would be 'not to promote, but rather to retard, the settlement of the question.' Nor can the Government proposition be carried, if Lord Melbourne is to be believed, by any but revolutionary means, involving the disorganization of society, and other moral and political evils of the most frightful magnitude.

"For all these reasons, it appears to us impossible to doubt that every man who really cares for the poor, and is not wedded to political economy, would rather get rid of the Poor-Law Commissioners and the workhouse test, at the expense of submitting to the existing Corn-Laws, than assist Lord Melbourne's ministry to rivet the New Poor-Law upon the country for the sake of a violent, and in all probability a profitless agitation, against the Corn-Laws. But most assuredly, if the Conservatives are not prepared to concede upon one or the other of those subjects, they must not expect to succeed to that popularity which the Whigs have lost.

"It is in the power of Sir Robert Peel to maintain himself as Minister, to command a majority upon a dissolution of Parliament, to defeat all the trickery of his adversaries, without any sacrifice of principle. He has said, that it would be discreditable to Parliament to hold out any prospect of a return to the abuses of the old administration of the Poor-Law; and no one wishes him to do so. He has expressed himself willing to watch a little further the progress of the present law, considered as an experiment; and no objection will be offered in any quarter to its provisional continuance, with some obvious modifications, till the entire subject can be calmly and fully investigated. All that is at present required of him is a pledge that justice shall be done, that the question *shall* be solemnly reconsidered and adjusted on a Christian and constitutional basis when he is minister. We cannot believe it possible that he should hesitate, under existing circumstances, and after the experience of the Nottingham election, to adopt this obvious, this necessary, and manly course."—*Times*, May 6, 1841.

"The poor are the *aristocracy* of the church."—*Dr. Hook*.

"While the farmers are complaining of the prices of their produce, why are the consumers kept with *locked jaws*?"—*The Suffolk Juror*.

"I was ever of opinion, that the honest man who married, and brought up a large family, did more service, than he who continued single, and only talked of population."—*Goldsmith*.

"But now for the New Poor-Law in these parts, conceive one of the most beautiful, rural, romantic, agricultural districts; inhabited by a few nobles, who are surrounded by their tenants and labourers, as industrious, as moral, and as confiding a race of men as dwell under the sceptre of Victoria. Think, too, of that national feeling of veneration which the Welsh foster towards their lords—and of the patriotic fire which once warmed the hearts of the Welsh nobility!—and see, what 'liberal and enlightened principles' have done for Wales. Behold the descendants of those, who would have suffered ten thousand deaths, rather than have submitted to foreign tyranny, now base enough—(they are actually so degraded, that they submit)—to become the tools of the Poor-Law Commissioners, to *delude* and *betray* their confiding tenants and labourers into slavery; nay, *so wickedly are they debased*, that, knowing full well, that *the blood of the Welsh* would rise even *in spite of them*, if the truth were told, they are so far sunk, as willingly and knowingly to *misrepresent the nature of the new law* to the people, and then, to induce their tenants and labourers to submit to be harnessed to the chariots of the Somerset-house despots! All this is true. Newspapers are very little read hereabouts. So the *word* of a noble is believed. The nobles become Guardians, they act as the tools of the Assistant-Commissioner, and have actually got all the machinery of the 'Devil's own' established, under the assurance, '*that the only alteration on the old law is, that the poor are to be much better provided for—that out-door relief is to be continued as heretofore, and that the Union workhouse is only intended for those poor invalids who require good nursing, and who, under the old law, were left without many comforts, which will be provided for them in the Union workhouse!*'—and they are all assured, '*that no separation of man and wife will ever be attempted.*' Such, I do assure you, are the *promises* made to these people—and made, too, by men who are called 'noble!' As I said before, they read little—but now that they see the *size* of the 'house,' they wonder—and some little light is breaking in upon their understandings. As one person said to



me—‘they begin to fancy that they have been cheated;’ and another said, ‘The labourers, now that they see the house building, have a horror about it.’ I was assured, by a very respectable tradesman, ‘that forty-nine out of fifty, who really know anything about the law, detested it; but,’ he added, ‘the landlords are all for it, and the tenants must do as the stewards bid them.’ One man told me, ‘we look to Yorkshire and Lancashire to get rid of it—we dare not oppose our landlords.’ I am going to St. Asaph on Monday, and will see some of the officers, and try if I can find some labourers who can speak English. Is it not disgusting to see a Government of a great nation, in one district employing police, and spies, and soldiers to force the people to submit to slavery: and, in another, engaging noblemen to delude, deceive, and betray a confiding people into the hands of a tyrannical Commission? With such a Government and such a race of nobles (?) what chance is there for the constitution and institutions, but in the people? The day of reckoning will not long tarry.”—*Mr. Oastler’s Letter to the “Northern Star,” from Rhyl, near St. Asaph, Oct. 6, 1838.*

“When the New Poor-Law was first introduced into the House of Commons, my highly-valued friend, the Hon. Wm. Duncombe, M. P., did me the honour to send me a copy of the Bill. I was horror-struck when I perused it. I saw, at once, that it was the death-knell of England;—that if it were passed and enforced, the constitution and institutions of this country must inevitably fall;—that the Church of England would be a useless incubus;—because, then, Christianity would be banished,—every precept of Christian morals having been enacted by that law to be a lie. Indeed, my lord, I was horror-struck; and I resolved, as soon as I could find time, to visit London, and try if, by any means, I could prevent its passing into a law. When the Bill was in your lordship’s House, I did visit London, and used such means as I had, to obtain interviews with the nobles of the land. I had, on several previous occasions, been honoured by interviews with the Duke of Wellington. I was first introduced to him by the Duke of Rutland. My first call was at Apsley-house. I had a long conversation with his Grace; but it was of no use, his Grace ‘was pledged’ to the diabolical measure. I waited upon other noblemen, and,

amongst the rest, the late venerable Earl Eldon. I found his lordship as much opposed to the Bill as I was; he declared it ‘to be unconstitutional;’ ‘but,’ he added, ‘it is sure to pass; for, nowadays, they will pass anything:’ and then, he said, ‘there is no authority to empower the legislature to pass such a law. If matters have, indeed, come to this, a national convention should be called. But I can do no good now; I have withdrawn from the House of Lords.’ I left London with a heavy heart; I had appealed to the fathers of the nation,—to those whom I had always recognized as the supporters of the institutions of the country,—to those whom the constitution had ennobled, not for their own sakes, but for the protection of the rights, liberties, and lives of the people. I had appealed to the aristocracy of England, whom I had always honoured, and in defence of whose rights I had often subjected myself to the popular fury, and for whom I had sacrificed more than any other man in my situation and circumstances. But my appeal was in vain. The claims of the sons of industry were disregarded, and the rights of the poor were confiscated, at the bidding of the very man whom the poor had just before raised to the ‘wool-sack!’ From that moment, my lord, I resolved to turn to the people, and try if, by their means, I could save my country from the ruin which the aristocracy had prepared for it, and for them. To the people my appeal has not been in vain. Since then, I have addressed many hundreds of thousands of my fellow-countrymen on the subject of the New Poor-Law; and I have everywhere found them unanimous in petitioning for its total repeal. On one occasion, I met three hundred thousand Englishmen, all of them peaceable, my lord, but all of them resolved not to submit to it. I remember well, during the Reform mania, that Lord Brougham (then Mr. Brougham) frightened the old Parliament out of their senses, by representing the Birmingham meeting of a hundred and fifty thousand persons, as an overwhelming demonstration. He talked of the great ease with which they might be armed with muskets, and he declared that no Government could stand against them. Now, my lord, these three hundred thousand men of Yorkshire, were the very men who raised Brougham to the wool-sack; they are quite as able to carry arms, and to use them, as were the men of Birming-

ham: but, because Lord Brougham laughs at them, the Government does not seem to fear them. Thank God, however, the destinies of my country are no longer in the keeping of Brougham."—*Extracted from Oastler's Letter to the Bishop of Exeter, which appeared in the "Manchester and Salford Advertiser," June 2, 1838.*

A POOR-LAW REPEALER WITH A HOOK.—"Lord Morpeth then addressed the electors. He said, there had been a great many alterations since first he was elected as their representative. Among those alterations, and for the better, he would mention the Reform Bill, which had given representatives to large towns instead of to Gatton and Old Sarum. The abolition of the slave-trade was another meritorious act performed by his Majesty's Government since he was last elected to be their representative. That measure was passed by a liberal and enlightened Administration. The passing of the Poor-Law was another alteration made by the Liberal Government. He confessed that was not exactly for the better. It might work well in the agricultural districts, but he doubted whether it would do well for the manufacturing towns and districts. He considered that the Commissioners' powers were too much extended. There was, however, a report before the House on that subject, and whenever it was brought to a discussion, he would vote most promptly for any modification that might tend to the comfort and happiness of the poor and destitute. Corporation Reform was another beneficial measure that had been passed by the Liberal Administration, and he was most anxious that Irishmen should have the same measure granted to them, and so placed on the same footing as their more favoured brethren in England. The noble lord concluded by calling on the electors to unite all their powers for the purpose of giving full effect to their wishes, to vote for the Liberal party, for the Ministry, and the Queen. (The noble lord was frequently saluted with mingled cheers and hisses from the multitude.)"—*Leeds Election, July 18, 1837.*

"Laws incompatible with the constitution are in themselves void."—*Elements of Universal Law.*

"What the Parliament doth shall be holden for naught whensoever it shall enact that which is contrary to the rights of nature, or the principles of the constitution."—*Sharp and Lord Coke.*

"LETTER TO THE RIGHT HON. EARL STANHOPE, PRESIDENT OF THE METROPOLITAN ANTI-POOR-LAW ASSOCIATION, FROM MR. R. J. RICHARDSON, OF SALFORD, SECRETARY OF THE SOUTH LANCASHIRE ANTI-POOR-LAW ASSOCIATION.

"*Salus populi suprema lex.*"

"MY LORD,—It gives me great pleasure to witness a nobleman of your elevated rank and character, devoting your time, your talents, and your influence, to promote the doctrine which I have chosen for my motto, the opinion written at the conclusion of the Twelve Tables of Rome, that 'The safety of the people is the highest law.' I cannot but admire the truly patriotic fire which animates your Lordship's breast, and urges you forward in the people's defence, at a time when they stand much in need of protection from the evil doings of those whose real duty should be to succour and protect them. *Allied to no faction, the slave of no party, above the artifices and intrigues of courts and cabinets, regardless of the favours or the frowns of any ministry, or of anything which they can bestow,* you have generously come forward, at the call of the people, with whom you deem it no disparagement to associate, claiming no superiority or slavish obedience in consequence of your rank, but humbly to ask their assistance to join you in the common cause of humanity, of freedom, and of peace.

"The first principle of civilization is that of the associating of mankind in one common family, for one general purpose, the protection, the welfare, and the happiness of the whole: and the further any laws may differ from this principle, they become growing abuses of the social compact. Hence it is, that mankind, so prone to err, have become divided, and the doctrine of *meum* and *tuum* has distracted society, by creating envy, strife, and uncharitableness, in the world. Even in our own nation, where we boast of the excellency of our civil constitution, as being compatible with the true and genuine principles of liberty, we have divided opinions (*not all just ones*) upon the subject of right and wrong, splitting up society into factions, and sacrificing the common interest of the people. Such is the madness of political partizanship, and the unblushing turpitude of the leaders of factions, when called upon to legislate for the good of the commonwealth, that the principle of every mea-



sure they propound is the accumulation of power to their own party, be they Tory, Whig, or Radical; and, in the midst of their contentions, their philosophizing and their metaphysical abstractions, they hurl the cause of suffering humanity into the whirling vortex of experimental cruelty, until the poor, the aged, and the infirm, are dragged down into the abyss of destruction.

“To counteract the effects of this state of things, and remove the causes that produce them, your Lordship has long toiled, almost in vain, and your endeavours have been directed to restore to the people the protection the constitution affords of their lives, liberties, and fortunes, and to prevent the poor from being dispossessed of those rights which are inherent in their nature, and were ratified at their birth, the right to a living from the land whereon they were born, in consideration of their allegiance to its laws, and the services they have rendered upon it for the good of the whole.

“The Poor-Laws of England have long been celebrated for their simplicity, the honesty of their purpose, and the wisdom of their provisions. They have called forth the warmest panegyries from the most eminent writers upon English jurisprudence, one of whom, the great Lord Bacon, Chancellor to James I., called the 43d of Elizabeth, ‘*The poor man’s charter*,’ and my Lord Coke said the same Act was the ‘most perfect specimen of human legislation.’ No wonder that you, my Lord, should cling so tenaciously to this good old law, which Sir W. Blackstone, Attorney-General to Queen Anne, said had so interwoven charity into our constitution, that to repeal it would be to virtually abrogate the constitution itself. No wonder that the people should have been alarmed at the gradual innovations made upon this benevolent statute by subsequent Acts of Parliament, until its powers and provisions have become nugatory by the passing of the New Poor-Law. All I marvel at, my Lord, is, how it comes to pass, that the people have remained *quiescent* at this serious outrage upon the constitution; but my wonder ceases when I contemplate the deplorable condition of the great mass of society;—when I pause to reflect upon what they once were, and what they now are;—when I sigh for the days that are passed, when our forefathers were comparatively happy and free in the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour.

In the rude ages of English history, even so far back as the days of Saxon idolatry and superstition, the laws approximated nearer to the principle of civil liberty, and inspired the people with greater veneration for their institutions and more profound respect for their rulers, than now, after the lapse of eight centuries, when law-making has become a matter of business, and not of civil policy; and instead of our lawgivers being regarded as the brightest ornaments of political jurisprudence, possessing all the wisdom, virtue, and noble-minded independence of our venerable Saxon ancestors, they are a degenerate, selfish, cruel, experimentalizing band of factious conspirators, leagued in unholy alliance against the commonwealth, exciting in the people a rankling hatred and a deep spirit of revenge.

“‘The principal aim of society is to protect individuals in the enjoyment of those absolute rights which were vested in them by the immutable laws of nature, but which could not be preserved in peace, without that mutual assistance and intercourse which is gained by the institution of friendly and social communities.’ (*Blackstone’s Com.*, Lib. 4, vol. 1.) Therefore, it may be justly observed, that the Great Alfred had this principle in view when he digested the infinite diversity of laws passed during the heptarchy into one common code, the ‘*liber judicialis*,’ and instead of trusting to an absolute power in the monarch, he instituted the Wittena-Gemotes, or, Parliament of wise men, to frame laws for the government of the social system; and, in order to secure respect for those laws, he caused their administration to be lodged in magistrates elected by the people; and, to prevent any undue influence being exercised over the lives and liberties of the people by such magistrates, he established that great palladium of British freedom, trial by jury, as an admirable test of truth. Justice then knew no distinction; the rich and the poor were equal in the eye of the law: the wapentake court, with the chief-baron at its head, afforded protection to all, and the institution of *Frank-pledge* bound the whole of society in one common bond of fellowship; and so rigid was Alfred in preserving the strict rules of equal laws and equal justice, that forty-four judges were hanged in one year for wilful and corrupt judgment against the poor people. (*Selden; Mirrour of Justice*, &c.) It is true, at this time there were

many barbarous laws, such as Trials by Ordeal; but these laws were not the effect of Alfred's institutions, but the remains of a system engendered by the superstitious character of the northern nations, whose barbarous customs yet exist in many parts of refined Europe:—and even in England, in the nineteenth century, we have a refined system of torture, a new mode of trial—trial by hunger, in order to 'test' the destitute condition of the poor in 'Union' prisons.

"In the early dawn of Christianity in England, even in the Saxon times, we find recorded in the *Mirrou of Justice*, a book written antecedent to the Norman conquest, chap. 1, s. 3., the following strong proof of the existence of a legal provision for the poor, and the obligations of the people to maintain them: 'It was ordained, that the poor should be sustained by *Parsons*, by *Rectors* of the Church, and by the *Parishioners*, so that none of them die for want of sustenance.' Let us pause, and reflect upon the moral and social condition of the people in those dark ages, when, as historians tell us, they were barbarous and superstitious; and, after a pause, venture to contrast that truly benevolent ordination with the practice of parsons, and rectors, and parishioners, in this brilliant age of systematic refinement and human improvement: how shall we find the Right Reverends, the Very Reverends, and the Rev. Pastors, of the modern church employed? Not in administering relief to the poor, not in attending to their temporal wants, not in seeing that none of them die for want of sustenance (for that is an *every-day* occurrence), not in sharing the tenth part of the produce of the earth with the aged and the infirm, the destitute, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger, but luxuriously enjoying all the legitimate revenues of the poor as a vested right, settled upon them by Act of Parliament, or by the will of the most voluptuous monarch that ever disgraced England's throne, as a reward for their base apostasy to the religion of their fathers, and their panderings to his licentious appetite and ambitious designs. The revenues belonging to the poor in this country formed the largest branch of the public treasury, inasmuch as they not only consisted of the predial tithes, but that a very large amount was derived from private endowments. The charitable spirit that existed before the Christian era in all nations, had laid the foundation of the maxim,

'that the rich were bound by moral obligation to maintain the poor.' The era of Christianity confirmed the maxim, and it became one of the canons of the ancient Catholic Church: as the heathens had established that rule, the Christians found it not incompatible with their pious offices to exhort the rich to observe it; hence originated the numerous monastic institutions all over Europe, as also in England, where the religious houses were so immensely rich, not so much in costly furniture, as in their territorial possessions, which afforded them every means of administering relief to the poor and needy, as well as to contribute to the service of the state.

"It is very probable that Great Britain was first laid out in parishes by Archbishop Honorius, about the year 630, during the Saxon Heptarchy: but as the country was divided into provinces, and under the dominion of different monarchs, and as the civil wars between Edwin, King of Northumberland, Penda, King of Mercia, and Cenowaleh, King of Wessex, kept the island in a fermented state, the clergy were obliged to confine themselves to their monasteries, and wait a more favourable opportunity of carrying out the ecclesiastical divisions as laid down by Honorius. In 709, Ina, King of Wessex, published a code of Saxon laws, many of which were for the government of the church and the poor; and in 727, the tax of Peter's Pence was first levied for the support of the college at Rome. Selden observes, at this time, that the clergy lived in common without any division of parishes: this cannot be true; for the island was divided into parishes, although the clergy could not avail themselves of such division in consequence of the intestinal commotion that prevailed. In 828, Egbert commenced the kingdom of England, by uniting the several kingdoms of the Heptarchy. This encouraged the clergy to persevere in completing the boundaries of parishes; but in forty years after, the Danes ravaged England, pillaged the churches and monasteries, ravished, and afterwards burnt the nuns to death, and committed many other excesses, until Etheldred was slain, and Alfred ascended the throne, who waged war against them, and finally succeeded in expelling them from the kingdom: then the civil divisions of the kingdom took place, and the clergy completed their arrangement of parishes. The tithes, up to this period, had been considered a voluntary offering to the



church; the clergy now began to consider them a legal impost upon the land, and the divisions of parishes enabled them to levy them in a more regular manner than they had hitherto been, thereby reducing their collection into a system, and the poor consequently were better attended to by their pastoral deacons; and, despite of the turbulence of the times, the Danish invasions, and the Norman conquest, this right of the poor remained inviolate.

“In the reign of Henry I. a convocation of the clergy was held, in which the canon laws were revised, and one of them clearly established the division and uses of the tithes, which right existed until the period of the Reformation. In *Dugdale's Monasticon* is shown the express canon, directing and authorizing such division. He says, ‘*Ut ipsi sacerdotes a populis suscipiant decimas, et nomina eorum qui cumque dederint scripta habeant, et secundum auctoritatem canonicam coram testibus dividant; et ad ornamentum ecclesiæ primam eligant partem; secundam partem ad usum pauperum et perigrinorum per eorum manus, miserecorditer cum omni humilitate, dispensent; tertiam, vero, subimet ipsis sacerdotes reservent.*’ ‘The priests themselves may receive the tithes from the people, and record in writing the names of those who give them, and divide them in presence of witnesses, according to canonical authority, and let them take the first part for the ornament of the church, and distribute the second with their own hands, compassionately and humbly, for the use of the poor and the stranger, and the third part the priests may reserve for themselves.’ Sir W. Blackstone differs a little from the above authority, and adds a fourth division, namely, one for the use of the bishop. He may be right in thus dividing the tithes into four divisions, but such division cannot be antecedent to Hen. I.; and if it was so, what authority had the bishops to collect the tithes, when we find that the clergy generally were obliged to forego many of their privileges for want of power to enforce them, during the long contests between the Britons, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, which unsettled all the ecclesiastical institutions of the country; and until Archbishop Anselm, in the reign of Hen. I., obtained something like a concession of particular rights of privileges, appertaining to the church, nothing of permanent or settled division can be said to have existed. Besides, it is fair to assume, that the bishops, as the heads of

the clergy, received the whole of the third division of the tithes as set forth in the canon of Hen. I., and made such subdivisions of the ecclesiastical moiety as they, by their superior wisdom in conclave assembled, might determine. In addition to such monastic revenues they themselves possessed, they had the power to retain what they pleased from the tithes entrusted to them for division and distribution; and having also great power in the state, they could exercise a control over such revenues as they thought meet.

“If we look back into the earlier history of Europe, we find a similarity existing in the division of the ecclesiastical and lay revenues in France, which clearly shows, that the poor were always considered in the testaments of the rich: Charles, Emperor of France, in the year 801, who, ‘for his grate dedis and victories, he deseruyd to be namyd Charlis the Grate, and for all his grate myghte and honoure, yet that notwithstanding, he was meke and lowlie in his hert, and mylde and graciouse to the poore, and marcyfull to wretchis and nedy; and set his sonnes to lerne as well letters, as marcyall and knightlye featis, and his doughter he set to spynnyng and woll warke. This noble man Charlis, iii yeres before his deth, he had peace with all cōtreys, as well such as were obeysaunt vnto the empyre, as such as longed to his domynyon of France. In the which tyme of rest, amonge other goodlye und vertuous dedis, he made his testament, and distributyd his tēporall moveable goodis in iii partis, wherof ii partis he gave to maynteynyng of Bisshopis and other mynysters of the church, and for the reparayon of churchis and necessaryes to the same, and to y<sup>e</sup> maynteynyng of the dyuine seruyce of God, with also the ayde and fedynge of poore and nedy people; and the thyrde parte to his children, and others of his allye.’ (*Fabyan Chron. Cap. Clvi.*)

“The above instance of charity was only one of many in the earlier history of Europe. England could at all times boast of her benevolence. Whilst Europe was in a state of slavery, England enjoyed comparative freedom, because her institutions were founded upon justice, and her people were charitably disposed towards each other; notwithstanding the changes of dynasties, the civil wars, and other internal distractions, charity and benevolence were the characteristics of the rich towards the poor. Virtues such as these will always prevail. The law of

Elizabeth made charity a part and parcel of the constitution. It compelled those among the rich that were selfish, to yield a portion of their wealth to support the poor and needy, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. It was a glorious confirmation of that invaluable right of every poor and helpless person to a maintenance from the soil whereon they were born and reared. The Report of the Charity-Commissioners incontestably proves, that since the Elizabethan age, the rich have contributed largely to swell the poor's funds in their respective parish churches. Munificent endowments and voluntary donations are found recorded in the parish books, and on public boards in parish churches, proving the charitable zeal of our fathers. That zeal is fast dying away, and a spirit of selfishness, called economy, is spreading abroad. The Charity-Commissioners have been at work to discover the amount of funds, disposable by the churchwardens to the uses of the poor, and the whole have been handed over to the Poor-Law Commissioners of Somerset-house. The Malthusians hate charity; they discountenance charitable acts, even to the distribution of roast beef and plum-pudding upon a Christmas-day according to the ancient custom of the land. 'Charity,' say they, 'makes men idle, improvident, and profligate.' I say the want of charity in the human heart makes men demons, cruel, selfish, and despotic. Well may you, my Lord, be so zealous in the cause of the poor, when you see them cast upon the wide world, to live or die upon whatever resources chance may throw in their way. Well may you make the New Poor-Law a question of questions, when you behold the noblest virtue that ever adorned the human mind sacrificed to the cold and heartless philosophy of a Malthusian age. Well may you feel indignant at the conduct of those of your fellow-citizens who support such infernal measures as the New Poor-Law, so well calculated to destroy every noble sentiment of the human heart, every tender feeling of humanity, every tie that binds man to his fellow-man, every endearment that makes the family and the home of an Englishman worthy of living and dying for; every principle of political government, which has made our constitution and laws the wisest and freest of any other monarchy in the world. Well may you, my Lord, take your stand against such an odious, unchristian, un-

English and unnatural law, as the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act. May you ultimately succeed in your endeavours to rescue the poor of England from its operations: my hearty concurrence, in all your views, be with you—*Go, and prosper!*"

"I remain,

"Your Lordship's obedient servant,

"R. J. RICHARDSON.

"Feb., 1837."

This letter is well worth a most attentive perusal by lord and loon: its sentiments are pre-eminently honest, honourable and hearty—truly British—and worthy of those better days when everything British was not pronounced *Brutish* as it now, alas! is. I am a great admirer of the gallant, glorious forefathers of our isle—their humane charities, and the charms, hardly yet forgotten, of their noble patriotism, heroic qualities, unbounded hospitality, and that sturdy uncomat-able independence of soul, which neither the sovereign on his throne, or *sovereigns in a purse* (*tempting tackle* nowadays!) could seduce or subdue. The thoughts that breathe of our Saxon sires in my friend Richardson's letter, are, therefore, especially *grateful* to me, and it affords me cordial pleasure to embalm them, for ever and ever, in the pages of this work, which the patriotic and humane will not willingly let die, I know.—G. R. W. BAXTER.

"They had called for him from the knowledge they had of the opposition which he had shown to that unconstitutional and oppressive law, the New Poor-Law. (Great cheering.) He had frankly and readily responded to their call, because he knew that, whatever other men might be as to talents, none could possibly have exceeded or surpassed him in their zeal and endeavours to obliterate that law from the statute-book. (Cheers.) In that respect, therefore, he humbly conceived that his claim was at least equal to that of the first man in the realm, be he whom he might. He could only add upon that head that, such as he had been, such, with God's blessing, he should continue to be. (Loud cheers.) He had entertained with others a hope that the country would be bettered by Parliamentary re-



form; and that the present Ministers, as Reformers, would do something in favour of those on whose backs they came into power, and by whom they were supported in it. Many upright Whigs, he believed, as well as himself, had entertained the same opinion; but when he saw the Reform Ministry turn round upon the industrious poor of the realm, and not only upon the poor and defenceless, but upon the constitution itself (cheers), and drive the industrious labourer and artisan to despair and even death, by their New Poor-Law and by their huge prison work-houses (cheers continued), he certainly then thought that humanity was the first of all Christian duties. (Cheers.) All the old laws of the constitution were to be overturned; Commissioners, Assistant-Commissioners, Relieving-officers, and men of he knew not how many new appellations and offices (cheers; 'Take that Mr. Barnett'), were to supersede all the official persons of the old constitution. (Cheers.) The dissatisfaction engendered by these various forms of tyrants produced their new rural police. (Cheers.) That and their New Poor-Law produced Chartism. What would come next? Perhaps a proclamation of military law (cheers)—for, whatever might be done, the people of this country could not, and would not, be driven from their once respectable station, down, and down, and down, into slaves, without a struggle. (Cheers continued.) Finding his task hopeless in the House of Commons, and feeling that he ought not to obtrude his own opinions without further support, in or out of the House, he retired, resolving to husband his forces for a better and more promising time. (Hear, hear.) That time had at last come; and here he was, at their invitation (great cheering), because he felt that, if he should be returned to Parliament, he should be able to act with effect as their representative. (Cheers.) There was, however, another subject upon which he had reason to feel satisfaction, with which the meeting might not be so well acquainted. If there was any one system of misgovernment, and of mischievous policy, which more than any other had tended to reduce the poor to that depressed state, for which the New Poor-Law was pretended to be the only panacea, it was the system of enclosures (cheers), by which, though the effect might not be so visible in that place as in the more rural districts, the poor man, who had been used to have the common land to

turn out his cow—and where there was a cow there was generally a pig—by which the poor man, he said, had been most unjustly deprived of those invaluable rights. (Cheers.) A Bill of that kind, in which he had supported their members, was one in which their own town, the very town of Nottingham, had been materially concerned. It was no apology for such a system to say, even if the fact were so, that some compensation was generally made to the poor. (Hear, hear.) No such compensation could be made (cheers), and if it were made to the poor man of the present day, or even of the present year, of what use was that to his successor in the cottage or tenement which had conferred that right? (Cheers.) Of these enclosures he had always been a decided enemy, and had in no fewer than three cases been the chief instrument in throwing out bills of that mischievous character and tendency. (Cheers.) The rich had no right thus to buy up the advantages of the poor, and to leave the future race to fare as they could. (Cheers.) The effect, however, of throwing out those three enclosure bills had not been confined to the bills themselves; for, from his success in those cases, a general apprehension had been created that others could not be carried; and, in fact, during the remaining three years that he was in Parliament, only a very few were passed; whereas, in the three subsequent sessions, the amount of enclosure bills had been doubled or trebled. (Cheers.) He only mentioned these facts to show, that he had never been indifferent to the privileges of the people, and above all to the rights of the poor. (Cheers.) His friends, Mr. Fielden and Mr. Wakley, had borne such generous testimony to his public conduct in that respect, that he thought it better to refer them to their expressions, than to say anything further on the subject himself. (Cheers.) He had told them in his address, that he had not been content merely with this activity against measures calculated to injure the poor, but that in everything connected with taxation he had been zealous in opposing those imposts which obviously pressed most heavily upon the industrious classes. (Cheers.) However, certainly, the Poor Law-Bill, as the master-mischief,—not only as the Devil, but as Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils,—did chiefly occupy his time (cheers), and engage his labour in order to thwart and put an end to it. (Cheers continued.)"—*Mr. Walter's Speech at*

*Nottingham Election*, (which he afterwards won gloriously) April 16, 1841.

The following Petition is from the parish of St. Clement, Ipswich Union, which shows the dissatisfaction that prevails. Agreed upon November 3, 1839:

“TO THE HONOURABLE THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

“We, the undersigned parishioners and inhabitants of the parish of St. Clement, in Ipswich, in the county of Suffolk, present this our humble Petition to yourselves, requesting you (as having the sole power) to relieve us as a parish from the Ipswich Union, and vest us with the power of conducting our parochial affairs unconnected with any parish whatever. Our reasons for making this request are as follow:—

“First. That to us, as a parish, there was not sufficient publicity given of the intention of the parish-officers to connect this parish with the Ipswich Union, and that we were consequently constituted part of the said Union without our knowledge, and entirely against our consent.

“Second. That had sufficient publicity been given, the parishioners would have decidedly opposed any connexion with the said Union, inasmuch that, at that period, a most salutary system of management was adopted and carried on in the parish. There was no cause of complaint. The rates were lowered from six shillings in the pound upon our assessment to two shillings and sixpence in the pound, and the necessitous poor equally done by as before. Impositions of various kinds were detected and abolished, and there was every probability of the rates never in future exceeding two shillings and sixpence in the pound.

“Third. That under the old Law and management, every parishioner had immediate access to the parish accounts, if requisite, to ascertain how the parish-officers expended the money collected for the relief of the poor; but that now our facility for obtaining any information upon that point is so circumscribed and mystified that the attempt is seldom made, and never attended with satisfaction.

“Fourth. That under the old Law much pecuniary relief was given, and the money so distributed was usually spent in the parish amongst the various classes of tradespeople; but now that the Poor-Law

Union is supplied by wealthy contractors, to the entire exclusion of those tradesmen whose means are insufficient to take any part of the contract. The whole of them are suffering from the system.

“Fifth. That under the old Law, in cases of immediate necessity and distress, immediate relief was given, whether as to money, medical attendance, or otherwise; but now, the Relieving Officer has the full power, so that the wants and necessities of the poor cannot be attended to with satisfaction.

“Sixth. That under the old Law, if a medical man rendered essential service to any pauper, whatever parish that pauper belonged to, that medical attendant was compensated for his expenses, time, and skill; but now, if a medical man is instrumental in saving the life of a fellow-creature, and is at ever so much trouble and expense so to do, and applies to the Guardians for payment of his account, because he is not the appointed surgeon to the Union he is refused payment, and put to a great trouble, and censured for interfering.

“Seventh. The present mode of managing parochial business being so repugnant to our feelings, and opposed to our views, we, therefore, beg to take the management of our parochial business under our immediate control;—and your petitioners will ever pray,” &c.

“The Honorary Secretary (Mr. J. Duncombe) then read the remonstrance at length, as follows:—

“TO THE HON. THE COMMONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

“The earnest remonstrance of the undersigned electors, rate-payers, and others, in public meeting assembled.

“That the essential difference between a nation of freemen and a nation of slaves is this—that the former have the management of their public affairs, either by themselves or by their representatives, and that the latter have no such management, but are taxed without their consent, or that of their representatives.

“That Englishmen have been favourably distinguished by possessing a larger portion of self-government than most other nations, and more especially parochial self-government, which has descended to them from the earliest times, and has been, and is, in the opinion of the ablest writers, English and foreign,



the best preparative for national self-government.

"That in proportion to the increased education of the people they are still better fitted for self-government, parochial or national, and that knowledge has of late years increased with a rapidity, and to an extent, unparalleled in the history of the country.

"That, in accordance with this incontrovertible fact, the party at present holding the reins of Government contended strenuously, while out of office, for, and signalized their advent to office by carrying into effect, a considerable extension of the suffrage.

"That, nevertheless, after having thus increased the number of those who elect members of the legislature, the same party has most inconsistently abridged the means of parochial self-government by a plurality and proxy system of voting, which in effect entirely disfranchises 99 out of every 100 of those who support the poor (the rate-payers), and makes the landlords, who, as such, pay no rates, the sole electors of the Guardians of the poor.

"That such Guardians, even so elected, have very little power in the management of the parochial funds, or of the poor, but are subjected to the arbitrary caprice and ukases of a highly-salaried body, termed Poor-Law Commissioners, who, being neither ubiquitous nor omniscient, cannot know the necessities of each particular parish or case, and who, consequently, issue rules and orders of the most stringent and inflexible character, for the ever-varying infinitude of suffering which poverty produces.

"That were these men as wise, just, and humane, as their past conduct induces us to fear they are the reverse, they are invested with power with which no human being should be trusted—the unconstitutional power of making rules, orders, and regulations, equal in effect to so many acts of Parliament; and thus three salaried officials supersede and possess the united power of Queen, Lords, and Commons.

"That under this system the rate-payers and the poor are both oppressed; the former, being taxed without their consent, are treated as slaves; and the latter are incarcerated in gaols, called Union work-houses, and treated as felons; while, in many instances, they are worse fed than felons.

"That such has been the fearful amount of discontent, and so general the complaints arising out of the exercise of these

arbitrary powers, that it has been found necessary to add to the burdens of the people the enormous cost of a half-military horde of rural police, who, in the prevalent opinion of the community, are dispersed throughout the country to silence the wailings of the poor and the murmurings of the people.

"That, dissatisfied with the enormous power of evil they already possess, the Poor-Law Commissioners are anxious to increase and perpetuate it.

"That, regardless of the most solemn, reiterated pledges, that local acts and Gilbert Unions should not be interfered with, the object of the Government now appears to be by indirect means to repeal all local acts, and to destroy all Gilbert Unions, and thus deprive the rate-payers of the last vestige of parochial self-government.

"That the conduct pursued in relation to the New Poor-Law, from the day it was first proposed to the Legislature to the present time, appears to this meeting to have been of the most insincere and disingenuous character, discreditable under any circumstances, but on the part of a Government highly culpable, tending as it does to make public virtue a doubt, principle a word of no meaning, and Government an object of suspicion, contempt, and hatred.

"That this meeting deeply regrets the necessity of thus plainly stating their opinion, for they would wish to see the people free, the poor treated with humanity, and the Government beloved and deserving the confidence of the people.

"This meeting, therefore, begs most respectfully, but firmly, to remonstrate with the representatives of the people as to the course that has been already pursued relative to the Bill now before the House to increase and perpetuate the power of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and request the representatives of the people will lose no time in rejecting a measure so adverse to the principles of freedom, so injurious to the rate-payers and the poor, and so repugnant to the feelings of the British community.

"And this meeting will ever pray," &c.  
—*Anti-Poor-Law Meeting, Freemasons' Tavern, March 11, 1841.*

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The following is the answer of Earl Stanhope to the address of the Anti-Poor-Law delegates in Yorkshire:—

"Sir,—The address of the Anti-Poor-Law delegates, which was signed by yourself, as their Chairman, and which was presented to me by Mr. Oastler, has conferred upon me an honour which I most highly value. In the discharge of my public duty I have sought only the satisfaction of my own conscience; but I am proud to enjoy the approbation of my countrymen, which, next to the happiness that I should feel in being useful to them, is the only reward of which I could be ambitious. I wish that my exertions had been more worthy of their commendations, and that the powerful assistance which I derive from them, and from some portions of the public press that are eminently distinguished by their talents, had already enabled me to render them such services as might entitle me to their gratitude.

"As long as I am honoured with their confidence, which I shall ever be most anxious to deserve, and with their support, without which I could not even hope for success, I shall continue to defend, strenuously and steadfastly, the cause of the labouring classes, which I consider as my own, and to act in Parliament as their representative. They form the most useful, the most meritorious, and also the most numerous portion of the community, and their welfare is essential to that of the other classes as well as to the security of the State. Their rights cannot be attacked with impunity, and are founded, not on the statute of Elizabeth, by which they were merely recognized, but on the institutions of human society, and on the sacred and eternal rights of man.

"As I know that my intentions are pure and patriotic, and that I have truth and justice on my side, I am not deterred by any aspersions that may be cast upon me, and, amongst others, by that of my endeavouring to excite revolt, which would, on the contrary, be prevented by the course that I recommended, of redressing those grievances which, if allowed to continue, may lead to anarchy and convulsion. The most effectual way of avoiding disturbance is by removing just causes of discontent; and I have encouraged meetings and petitions by which public opinion may be legally and constitutionally expressed, and Parliament might be induced to repeal an odious and oppressive law. I thought it my duty to warn the House of Lords of the dangers to which the country and all its institutions are exposed from the consequences of that measure, and those who choose to persist

in it must be responsible for all the calamities which it may produce.

"I am not in the least influenced by the representations which I heard in Parliament, that the New Poor-Law is beneficial and acceptable to the labouring classes and to the whole community. If the three dictators entertain that opinion, let them subject it to the test of actual trial. They exercise an arbitrary authority over all those who may, through their misfortunes, be compelled to apply to their parishes for relief, and they possess the power (I do not say the right) of making, suspending, altering, or rescinding such rules, orders, and regulations, as they may think proper for the management of the poor, and for the formation or dissolution of Unions. Let them declare, by way of experiment, that every parish may refuse to join a Union, or may separate itself from that with which it had been incorporated, if such should be the decision of its vestry, in which, according to the ancient system, no person should be allowed to vote by proxy, or to have a plurality of votes. It would then be seen that the rate-payers would eagerly resume the management of their own parishes, that the Unions would be speedily dissolved, and that the labouring classes would no longer groan under that most detestable and despotic law.

"After presenting to-day to the House of Lords several petitions, and, amongst others, one from the Trades' Union of Manchester and Salford, against the New Poor-Law, I stated my intention to bring this subject very frequently, and in various forms, under the consideration of that House. I expressed my earnest hope, and my confident expectation, that the people, to which an appeal must be made at the ensuing elections, would, in all quarters of the country, declare very strongly its sentiments upon this subject, which is of vital importance to all classes of the community. I added, 'It will very much depend on the result of these elections, and particularly with reference to the New Poor-Law, whether the peace of this country will be preserved, whether the property of this country will be protected, and whether the institutions of this country will continue to exist.'

"Most fervently do I hope, that the opportunity which a dissolution of Parliament offers will be duly employed, that a close and cordial union of all classes will be formed, as I recommended in a letter to Mr. Oastler, that zeal and energy will



everywhere be shown, and that strength of numbers with uniformity of action, will insure the success of those who are friends to the real interests of the country, the defeat and discomfiture of those who call themselves 'political economists,' and the speedy and entire repeal of the New Poor-Law.

"Allow me, before I conclude, to thank most cordially you, and the Anti-Poor-Law delegates, for the great kindness of their address, to express the extreme satisfaction which I have derived from it, and to offer to you my most grateful acknowledgments, with the assurance that I shall always continue to be

"Your most faithful

"and devoted servant,

"STANHOPE.

"London, July 15, 1837.

"To Mr. Charles Robinson."

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*"To Her most Gracious Majesty Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith.*

"The Petition of the Loyal and Independent Inhabitants of the Borough of Oldham, in the County Palatine of Lancaster.

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,—

"We, your Majesty's faithful and loyal subjects of Oldham, have, on this day of your Coronation, assembled for the purpose of showing our firm attachment to your Majesty, and to those laws, and to that constitution, according to which it is no less your Majesty's pleasure than your duty, to govern the kingdom of England.

"Viewing, as we do, with joy and satisfaction, the ascension of your Majesty to the throne of your ancestors, we deeply regret that we cannot join with those of your Majesty's subjects who now celebrate that ascension with all the outward show of unmingled satisfaction. However much we may rejoice, and we do most sincerely rejoice, that your Majesty is our Queen, our joy is saddened and embittered by our firm conviction, that the rights of the Crown, and the rights and liberties of the people, are trampled in the dust by corruption and treachery. In such a state of things we consider it deceitful and disloyal to offer your Majesty any sort of congratulation. Being thus painfully situated, feeling that we ought not to let this day pass unnoticed, but feeling, at the same time, that we could not join in the rejoicing, real or pretended, or other-

wise, without doing violence to our sense of duty; we have come to the conclusion, after mature deliberation, that it would be most consonant with the circumstances of the case, with our feelings of duty to your Majesty and to our fellow-subjects, and we doubt not with your Majesty's feelings also, that we should in the best manner we may be able, lay before your Majesty one of the most unconstitutional, oppressive, and cruel, of the manifold grievances under which the crown and the people of this once glorious and happy, but now degraded and miserable kingdom of England, labour: trusting to the goodness and wisdom of your Majesty, under the blessing of Providence, to bring to yourself and your faithful people a speedy and happy deliverance.

"We, therefore, beg most humbly to submit to your Majesty, that it has been the undoubted right of Englishmen, from times to which the knowledge of man extendeth not to the contrary, to live in reasonable ease and comfort upon the soil on which it has pleased God to put them; that all the property and privileges of any of your Majesty's subjects are founded upon, and subject to this right, that even the allegiance and obedience which are undoubtedly due to the Crown and to the laws of England are so due, and due only upon the condition, that the Crown and those laws will afford full protection to the people in the enjoyment of this inalienable right: that this right has been most grossly, wickedly, treacherously, and cruelly violated, contrary to the peace, security, honour, and glory of your Majesty, your crown, and your dignity. That it is notorious, that this unheard-of wickedness has been perpetrated by three persons sitting in Somerset-house, in the city of Westminster, and known by the style and title of 'The Poor-Law Commissioners for England and Wales;' that these infamous persons, pretending to act under the authority and by the direction of an Act passed in the fourth and fifth years of the reign of your Majesty's lamented predecessor, have issued rules, orders, and regulations concerning the relief of the poor; that under these rules, orders, and regulations, poverty has been treated as a crime; your Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects have been confined in prisons, as a punishment for their unavoidable misfortunes; husbands have been separated from their wives, and children from their parents; that in this their state of unlawful imprisonment,

your Majesty's subjects have been ill-treated, abused and insulted, and that in very many instances; particularly by means of food insufficient in quantity, and pernicious in quality, whereby great numbers of your Majesty's subjects have been brought to premature deaths; that your Majesty's petitioners are convinced, if these horrible atrocities be not put an end to without loss of time, the bonds of society can not much longer hold together, and that even the stability of your Majesty's throne will be endangered.

"They, therefore, most humbly and earnestly pray that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to order, that such Commission do cease to exist, and that the three wicked and infamous persons aforesaid, be handed over to receive such punishments for their wicked acts as are by the laws of England in that case provided, and as to your Majesty's wisdom may seem meet.

"And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray

"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN."

#### "REPORT.

"The deputation of the Vestry, appointed to the National Anti-Poor-Law Association, have attended several meetings of that Association, and beg leave to report,—

"That the 'Poor-Law Amendment Act' has now been in operation nearly five years. It has had a fair trial, and it becomes highly important to ascertain, dispassionately, its results.

"Three classes of individuals vehemently assert, that it 'works well,' and are anxious for its permanence. They are—

"1. *The Government—it centralizes their power, and greatly increases their patronage.*

"2. *A numerous body of Landlords:—it enables them to overwhelm the rate-payers by a system of plurality voting, and to dispose of the money of their unrepresented tenants, under the denomination of poor-rates.*

"3. *The Poor-Law Commissioners and their dependents:—it gives them the liveliest interest in each succeeding quarter-day.*

"For these and other reasons, however, an immense majority of the population is decidedly opposed to the New Poor-Law.

"It subjects the pauper, untainted with crime, to the smallest quantity of food capable of sustaining life, and throws impediments in the way of obtaining relief,

which have produced extreme suffering, and even death, as verdicts of Coroners' Inquests attest.

"It thus treats poverty as a crime, and converts the workhouse into a prison. It prohibits the holiest charities of life, by separating parent from child, by forbidding the access of relatives, excepting at distant periods, and by preventing the reception of the smallest pittance from humane friends.

"It may be said to have almost legalized seduction, inasmuch as it punishes the victim, while the chief culprit generally escapes with impunity, and is encouraged to repeat the crime.

"It thus tends to produce an appalling amount of infanticide, and destroys the warmest feelings implanted by the Creator in the human heart.

"It is most tyrannical to the rate-payers. It gives in some cases six votes to the landlord, who as landlord pays no rates, while his tenant, who provides the funds, has only one vote:—the consequence of this is, that the votes of a minority, who ought not to vote at all, overwhelm those of the vast majority.

"It assumes that the people in every parish throughout the country have less charity for the poor, know less of their condition and necessities, are less acquainted with their own interests, less careful of, and less fitted to manage them, than the three paid Commissioners at Somerset-house:—assumptions as opposed to truth, as they are adverse to the best interests of the country.

"It creates functions incompatible with the institutions of a free people; it gives the Commissioners authority to issue Rules, Orders, and Regulations, equal in effect to so many Acts of Parliament; thus investing three salaried officials with the power of Queen, Lords, and Commons.

"It creates and fosters a host of slavish aspirants for office, and stipendiary dependents upon the Government, always ready to second and support whatever attempts may be made to destroy the liberties of the people.

"It has excited general discontent, and alienated the affections and confidence of a great portion of the community in their rulers. It has created a strong impression, that the titular and landed aristocracy are determined, by a centralized system of government, to monopolize all power to themselves, to deprive the people of an important branch of their



local rights, and to coerce the poor to an extent hitherto never attempted.

"The advocates of this measure declare that it has reduced the rates; but they studiously conceal the fact, that in many parishes the rates have been raised; they do not tell us, that in consequence of the manual labour required for intersecting the kingdom with railroads, parochial rates have necessarily been diminished in several districts; nor do they inform us, that in those parishes where the local authorities are fairly chosen by the mass of the rate-payers, the rates have been reduced to a greater extent than they have been under the New Poor-Law Act.

"These ingenuous persons, too, carefully abstain from any allusion to the annual expenditure inflicted on the people, for the salaries to the Poor-Law Commissioners and their dependents, and to the amount of litigation which has resulted from the New Poor-Law, and the conduct of the Commissioners.

"The Deputation, therefore, respectfully recommend the vestry and rate-payers of St. Marylebone, to petition either for a total repeal of the New Poor-Law, or for such an alteration as will abolish the arbitrary and unconstitutional powers of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and will substitute in its place an independent system of local government, based upon the principle of equal representation—will deprive landlords, except when they are also rate-payers, of the power of voting either personally or by proxy—will secure to the resident rate-payers their inherent right of expending their own money, in the way best calculated to maintain a judicious economy, to administer to the necessities of the deserving and industrious poor, to punish profligacy, and to subject idleness to the severity it deserves.

"The Deputation further recommend, that the petition pray of the legislature to blot out from their statute book the foul stain of visiting the seducer's wrongs on his victim, woman, in the hour of her helplessness and shame—on woman, dependent by the law of nature, and excluded by the laws and usages of society, as well as by the condition of her sex, from those active and profitable pursuits in which man may successfully engage.

"G. A. YOUNG,

"W. KENSETT,

"J. WILSON."

# "PROTESTS AGAINST THE PASSING OF THE NEW POOR-LAW.

"Dissentient,—

"1. Because this bill is unjust and cruel to the poor. It imprisons in work-houses, for not working, those who cannot procure employment, and others for not maintaining their families who cannot, by the hardest labour, obtain wages sufficient to provide necessaries for their wives and children, although the want of employment and the low rate of wages have been occasioned by the impolicy and negligence of the Government.

"2. Because the present rate of wages, insufficient as it is, cannot be sustained, or employment found for the poor, or their condition materially improved, without ameliorating the condition of the Irish poor.

"3. Because we think that no necessity or sufficient expediency has been established to justify the withdrawing of the power of executing the poor-laws from the local authorities, and transferring them to a Board so constituted as proposed by the bill, and possessing the arbitrary powers conferred on three Commissioners appointed, and removable, by the Crown.

"4. Because we think the system suggested in the bill, of consolidating immensely-extensive Unions of parishes, and establishing workhouses necessarily at great distances from many parishes, and thereby dividing families, and removing children from their parents, merely because they are poor, will be found justly abhorrent to the best feelings of the general population of the country; and especially, inasmuch as it introduces the children of the agricultural poor to town poor-houses, it will conduce greatly to the contamination of their moral principles, and be calculated to prevent their obtaining in youth those habits of industry most likely to be beneficial to them in after life.

"5. Because the alteration of the Law of Settlement is calculated to operate unjustly, and to lead to still more extensive removals and more intricate lawsuits than the law as at present existing.

"6. Because the alterations made in the Bastardy Laws are inconsistent with the principles of Christianity, on which the Parliament of the united empire has always professed to proceed, since, both parents being equally bound by those principles to maintain their offspring, the father, being more able to contribute to that maintenance than the mother, ought

to pay more largely, whereas by this bill he is all but exonerated from any such obligation.

"7. Because we consider that nearly all, if not all, the evils which may have existed in the administration of the present laws might have been corrected by a short Act, securing the administration of the Poor-Laws under the control of the existing magisterial, and other local authorities.

"KENYON.

"H. EXETER, (for the 4th and 6th reasons.)

"ROMNEY.

"ROLLE, (for the 4th and 6th reasons.)

"WYNFORD.

"MOUNTCASHEL.

"PENSHURST, (for the 1st and 6th reasons.)

"TEYNHAM."

"PROTEST AGAINST RETAINING THE FIFTY-FIFTH CLAUSE IN THE POOR-LAWS' AMENDMENT-BILL.

"Dissentient,—

"1. Because the parts of the bill which it was proposed to reject impose the charge of maintaining every bastard child on the mother alone, thus laying on one of the parents the whole of a burden, which, by the most obvious dictate of natural justice, and the plainest deduction from the law of God, ought to be borne equally, or in proportion to their several ability, by both.

"2. Because the burden thus laid on the mother, in a degree far beyond her power to bear, will ordinarily place and keep her in permanent and absolute dependence on parish relief; and, coupled with another provision, which makes any man who shall marry any such mother liable to the maintenance of her child, can hardly fail to encourage the most unbounded licentiousness; for as the woman is thus shut out from all prospect of marriage, and as both she and her spurious progeny, present and future, be they as numerous as they may, will be all maintained by the parish, without further shame, suffering, or inconvenience to herself, as, in short, she will be deprived of all the aids to virtue which Providence has mercifully given in temporal objects of fear and hope, it can hardly be doubted that her own incontinence, and the absolute impunity held out to every man who, after she has once borne a child, may choose to offend with her, will make

almost every such woman to become a common prostitute, and every workhouse of which such women are inmates to be a common receptacle of prostitutes, from which they will carry on their vicious courses with little or no effectual restraint, unless the workhouse itself be converted into a gaol, and every woman who bears a bastard child, and is too poor to maintain it without assistance, be consigned to lasting imprisonment.

"3. Because another and more appalling consequence may be expected to ensue, in the case of those unhappy women who, after their fall from chastity, still retain some perverted feelings of honour, which the provisions of this bill are too likely to place in conflict with the best instinct of their nature, tempting them to the destruction or the abandonment of the wretched infants, whose lives cannot be sustained without subjecting their mothers to so much of lengthened misery and degradation.

"4. Because, while such is the injustice, and such the frightful tendency, of the provisions of this bill, as they affect women, its probable effects on men are scarcely less to be deprecated. From men in humble life this bill removes one of the most powerful checks on their licentious appetites, which Providence has imposed in the cost and burden consequent on the indulgence of them, thus opposing itself to God's holy institution for the continuance of the species by lawful wedlock. It does more—it directly tends to harden the hearts of men, to aggravate their natural selfishness, to pervert and corrupt their moral sensibility, to make them deem themselves released by Act of Parliament from one of the first and most obvious duties which the laws of nature—in other words, the laws of God, impose—a duty which must endure so long as the relation of parent and child shall subsist—a duty which no man, who deserves the name of man, has ever yet dared to set at naught.

"5. And, lastly, because a law which professes on the very face of it to bear so unequally on two parties whose moral guilt must be deemed equal—imposing its burden with exclusive and extreme severity on the more helpless, leaving the stronger and the abler absolutely untouched (even by the provisions subsequently introduced), so long as the weaker party is capable of bearing anything, and then interfering, not on the principle of equal justice, but solely to indemnify the parish for any excess of charge which the



exhaustion of the mother may make it impossible to wring from her—because such law cannot carry with it that which is indispensable in all wholesome legislation—the sanction of public opinion; but, proceeding on the unchristian principle of doing evil that good may come, must, like every other such attempt, fail of the end proposed, with this unhappy aggravation of the failure, that it tends to shake the confidence of the people in the justice and righteousness of the laws in general, and to impair their respect for that legislature which shall have ventured to enact it.

“H. EXETER.

“PENSURST.

“FALMOUTH.

“ROLLE.

“MOUNTCASHEL.

“August 8, 1834.”

“For a nation to be free it is sufficient that she wills it,” said French La Fayette. For a people to be free it is sufficient that they be fed, says G. R. Wythen Baxter. Town-folk gaze foolishly at the misery around them, and immediately resolve themselves into political economists and state tinkers, and talk you and the universe deaf with their panaceas for crime, rebellion, pauperism, and squalid misery. The repeal of the corn-laws would do the business, cries one. Nothing short of universal suffrage will suffice, roars another. The ballot for ever! sneaks a third. Give ‘em a liberal education, insinuates a fourth. What say you to emigration? lisps a fifth. A few rounds of ball cartridge, inclusive of an *ad. lib.* of sabre slashes, would be vastly effective, swears a sixth. Better leave things as they are, softly say all who have everything to lose. You be d—d, outrage all who have everything to gain. Let such prate till each is as black in the face as is ink in a bottle, with the recommending of his own favourite nostrum, but I say, the distress and discontent of the working classes are only to be removed by the immediate agitation in their behalf of a bread and meat question. Look to their bellies—‘the best of remedies is a beef-steak!’”—*G. R. Wythen Baxter.*

“In relation to out-door relief to the able-bodied labourer, we are well aware that the refusal is, in a majority of cases, a true test of idleness; but the Mede and Persian law, that no able-bodied labourer shall receive out-door relief, under any circumstances, is as cruel as it is unjust,

in the present state of society; and the cruelty and injustice, if persisted in, will certainly recoil fearfully in some future day.”—*Hereford Times*, March 27, 1841.

“The New Poor-Law, in principle, and many of its details, is an abomination—a violation of the inalienable rights of the poor—a disgrace to the name of England.”—*Leeds Intelligencer*, April 24, 1841.

“The main principle of the New Poor-Law seems to be to save money, no matter what misery it entails. It no longer remains doubtful, that this must become a party question, not a political party question, but a question between the benevolent and humane, and the cruel and oppressive; and it is to be hoped, that there is still enough of good old English feeling left in the country to preponderate in favour of the poor.”—*Mr. Jonathan Tootood's (of Bridgewater) Letter in the "Times,"* dated March 1, 1840.

“I know no crime of greater magnitude against the liberties of the people, than a *deliberate attempt* to alter the constitutional privilege of local government, and substitute in its stead a centralized *irresponsible* authority. I have said to one of the most eminent constitutional barristers of the day, who fully responded to my feelings, that much as I detest and abhor the suspension of the constitution, I much prefer it to that *total change* which is craftily and surreptitiously brought in under the guise of a Parliamentary enactment, since the very *suspension* itself still implies the constitutional RIGHT: just as the dictatorial power at Rome, as *originally* limited to six months, was preferable to the system of governing the Republic by commissions appointed by the *Senatus Consultum*, or decree of the Senate, such as that for regulating the affairs of the State, under which the three Commissioners, or triumvirate of Octavius (afterwards Augustus), Antony, and Lepidus, tyrannically disposed of the lives and fortunes of the people; or that other decree which lodged absolute power in the hands of Augustus, as Emperor, or Commander-in-Chief, for *ten years*, which formed the precedent for continuing it to him for ten years more, and so on, by three successive decades, to the end of his life. The old names of the other officers remaining all the while the same, the people were *imposed on*, and continued to call the State a republic in opposition to a kingdom, whilst it had, in fact, become an imperial monarchy, or autocracy.”—*William S. Villiers Sankey, Esq.*, April 28, 1841.

"The very essence of the British constitution is self-government,—the tendency of every plan of the reformers is centralization, or, in other words, despotic power. If there be any excellency in the constitution of England, over that of all other nations, it is in this—that it leaves the inhabitants of every locality to manage their own affairs. It is, in fact, an infinity of republics under one head; which head is not intended to exercise any influence or control over the executive in different parts of the provinces, but is established to poise and regulate the whole, by preventing the jarring which would otherwise be inevitably occasioned by the separate independencies. It is, in fact, the 'fly wheel' of society, interfering with none of the intricacies of its machinery, but regulating the movement of the whole. Now, Sir (*Thornhill*), the object of centralization is, to create one ruling, prying, irresponsible, despotic power, which is incapable of co-existence with our constitutional monarchy, and republican social system. It is intended to degenerate England into London, and thus to prepare the way for 'the destruction of the freedom of the people:' to destroy the local influence of property and of character, and to centre all power, both legislative and executive, in an irresponsible Government. Does it never strike you, Sir, that such a change cannot take place in England, without an entire destruction of the present social system? Do you never contemplate, that the same principle which now demands the sacrifice of the rights of the poor, must next demand those of the rich? Do you

not perceive, that the only way in which the new system can be carried out is, that you, who possess such very large estates, must yield up the local influence which such property gives you? It is evident to bystanders, like myself, who have no interest in the matter, that the only way in which the Commission scheme can be made to work well, is the entire destruction of every local influence, and the absorption of *all* power by the Central Commission. It is, therefore, evident, that such a measure must entirely break up our present system of society, and, consequently, I maintain, that it is safer to restore the sacred and constitutional rights of the poor, than to persist in a course which must inevitably bring ruin on its authors—the rich. 'Ah!—but' say you, 'when the powers of Government are centralized, there can be no movement excepting under their control—the *mobs* can no longer agitate society by their turbulent assemblings—every attempt at rebellion will be nipped in the bud—all then will be security and peace.' Say you so? Then, Sir, you have discovered the folly of the institutions of the monarchy and the aristocracy—you have proved them to be useless, expensive mischief-makers! You have found out that our wisest lawgivers were fools, and that all wisdom has, till now, been locked up in a Commission box!! Beware how you make so light of established principles! Be careful how you build the Commission buttress against the constitutional pillar." —*Oastler's "Fleet Papers,"* April 17, 1841.



## BASTILE FOOD.

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*Macbeth.*—Act IV., Scene 1st.

(Workhouse Laboratory—a Cauldron boiling—Groans—Three Guardians discovered.)

First Guardian.—Thrice hath the dying pauper groan'd,

Second Guardian.—And once his starveling child hath moan'd;

Third Guardian.—Rot-gut cries, "'Tis time, 'tis time :"

First Guardian.—Round about the cauldron go ;  
In the loathsome victuals throw :  
Bone that in the shambles' drain  
Thirty days and nights hath lain,  
Ta'en from sheep that had the rot,  
Boil there in the charmed pot.

All.—Double, double, toil and trouble,  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Second Guardian.—Fillet of a new-slunk calf.  
In the cauldron put but half ;  
Horn of goat and hoof of hog,  
Head of cat and lights of dog,  
Asses' tongue and weavled wheat,  
Sundry scraps of putrid meat,  
For a charm of powerful trouble,  
Like a hell-broth, boil and bubble.

All.—Double, double, toil and trouble,  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Third Guardian.—Shell of oyster, chicken's claw,  
Duckling's entrails, turkey's maw ;  
Measled pork and mouldy meal,  
CLODS and STICKINGS, greasy heel ;  
Sweltered cabbage, eye of ox,  
Scaly tail of mangy fox,  
Dug from out a pungent drain ;  
Horse's ear, and head of crane ;  
Here I have a strangled mole,  
Lately taken from his hole ;  
Add thereto the back of ferret ;  
Round about the cauldron stir it.

All.—Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble,  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

First Guardian.—Cool it with a pauper's blood,  
Then the charm is firm and good.  
(Enter Assistant Pinch-pauper.)

Pinch-pauper.—Well-done, I commend your pains,  
And every one shall share the gains.  
Round about the cauldron sing,  
Like good guardians in a ring,  
Praising all that you put in.

(Enter Relieving Officers and the chorus of Guardians—Groans and lamentations.)

Pinch-pauper.—Black gruel and white,  
Green gruel and gray,  
Mingle, mingle, mingle,  
They that can eat it may.

First Guardian.—Now for water; make it thin.

Second Guardian.—Put of that a plenty in.

Third Guardian.—That will make the paupers grin.

All.—Around, around, around, about, about,  
All bad come running in—all good keep out.—WEEKLY DISPATCH.

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"Having no intention of adding to the number of declaimers 'totally unacquainted' with the requisite quality and quantity of food, I shall confine myself as closely as possible to matter-of-fact occurrences officially reported. The first meeting of the Guardians of the Bridge-

water Union was held on May the 12th, 1836; the dietary appears to have been fixed on June the 14th, but for some time after the introduction of the new system it appears from the visitors' book, that the prescribed dietary was not rigidly observed. Milk was used, at the recom-

commendation of the medical officer, instead of the pint-and-half of gruel prescribed by the Commissioners; and during this time the inmates are reported generally healthy.' But I am informed, that the indulgence of milk was violently opposed at the Board, as being too great a deviation from the regulations of the Commissioners to be tolerated. Rigid obedience was enforced; and the following entry appears in the visitors' book, for the last time, on the 16th of August:—

"'Is the established dietary duly observed, and are the hours of meals regularly adhered to? Yes; except in the use of milk, as recommended by the medical officer, in lieu of gruel.'

"On the 23d of August the indulgence ceased, as appears by the following entry:—

"'August 23.—Inmates generally healthy. Gruel is now used instead of milk.'

"The fatal diarrhœa, which appears to have followed the introduction of the Commissioners' gruel in other places, soon appeared in the Bridgewater workhouse, alternating with, and increasing the violence of, other diseases. The medical report for September contained several cases of diarrhœa, and the visitors' book thus alludes to the prevalence of the disease in the workhouse:—

"'September 27.—The aged poor are afflicted with cholic and diarrhœa, and the children suffering from the same complaint.'

"The Bridgewater workhouse was now to afford an awful illustration of the fact, that diseases having their origin in local causes, become infectious wherever many sufferers are congregated in a mass. A large proportion of the inmates became reduced to mere skeletons by this loathsome disease. The sufferers, however cleanly in their former habits, involuntarily voided their fœces. The Governor, in describing the effect of the gruel, said, that—

"'It did not affect the poor people so much at first, but after the use of it for a few days, they became terribly bad; it ran from them while they were standing upright as they took it. It affected them upwards and downwards. All the way down the stairs, across the hall, and down the garden path, was all covered every morning, and the stench was horrible all through the house; making the people ill and sick who had not got the diarrhœa.'

"Thus a nauseous pestilence appears

to have pervaded the whole house; not confined to those who took the gruel, but infecting others who were obliged to breathe an atmosphere saturated with fetid exhalations. The family of the Governor were attacked; the Governor himself, although previously a healthy and a powerful man, became unable to go into the paupers' apartments without being violently affected, and the medical attendant, after repeated attacks of diarrhœa, and temporary respites, was at length obliged to relinquish his post to another.

"It would require too much space to give a copy of the medical weekly return; I shall therefore give a few short extracts from the 'visitors' book.'

"'October 25.—There is much sickness amongst the children and the old people. There are 33 cases under the care of the medical gentleman. 96 inmates in the house.'

"On the day that the above entry was read at the Board, a letter was received from the medical officer of the Bridgewater workhouse, stating, that he had 'watched' the effect of the gruel for 'some days;' and that he had stated the result to the visiting committee, 'as producing diarrhœa,' and imploring the Board of Guardians to sanction the substitution of milk. About this time the disease raged violently in the house; many were confined to their beds, utterly unable to help themselves; some children had died, and others were said to be dying.

"It will scarcely be believed, that under such frightful circumstances, all the indulgence which could be obtained by the representations of the surgeon, and some members of the visiting committee, was confined to the victims who were actually on the sick list.

"'The Board desired me,' says an active and humane member of the visiting committee, 'to inform the medical officer, that they wished every necessary comfort to be granted to the sick, but declared that they could not make any alteration in the dietary for those who were not actually on the sick list.'

"This statement accords with a letter to the Board from Mr. John Evered Poole, a medical practitioner, who acted for Mr. King, when prevented by illness from attending the workhouse. But while the urgent representations of Mr. King, and of the committee, had obtained 'necessary comforts' for the sick, they



had entirely failed to remove the alleged cause of the diarrhœa. On the very 25th of October, when the awful state of the helpless poor in the house was pressed on the Board, and ascribed to the use of oatmeal, on that very day a fresh supply was ordered to be sent into the house. That the use of the gruel was wilfully persevered in does not rest on the statement of an individual member of the visiting committee, or of the medical officer, however unexceptionable the testimony of those gentlemen may be. The fact may be traced through the records of the Board. The visitors' book contains entries to the following effect, from the 25th of October, to the end of the year:—

“ ‘Is the established dietary duly observed?—Yes, with respect to the healthy inmates; but for the sick, rice-milk and arrowroot have been substituted for gruel, by order of the medical officer.’ ”

“ ‘Here is unquestionable evidence, that the fatal gruel was regularly administered to the helpless poor, although it had been distinctly declared to the Board by the medical officer that it produced diarrhœa, and that irritation of the stomach and bowels produced other distressing effects! A considerable number of these cases terminated fatally, yet the Commissioners' deleterious compound continued to be perseveringly administered to those who were not yet seized with the prevailing disease. The wretched inmates of the workhouse were gruelled up to the very day of attack, when the poor sufferers were considered to be legally entitled, under the regulations of the Board, to the rice-milk, &c., prescribed by the surgeon for the sick! But, until they were attacked and placed on the sick list, the rules, regulations, and dietary table were to be inexorably observed, although the house had been so frightfully ravaged by diarrhœa, deliberately and officially declared to have been produced by the Commissioners' gruel.’ ”

“ ‘From the first appearance of the diarrhœa, on the introduction of the gruel, to the end of the parochial year, the entries in the visitors' book attest the distressing state of the poor in the Bridgewater workhouse; while the weekly list of articles ordered by the Board for the use of the unhappy inmates of that house, will show the recklessness with which the use of the gruel was persevered in.’ ”

“ ‘August 16, 1836.—No peculiar sickness. The dietary is observed, ex-

cept in the use of milk, as recommended by the medical officer, in lieu of gruel.’ ”

“ ‘August 23.—Inmates generally healthy. Gruel now used instead of milk.’ ”

“ ‘September 27.—The aged poor are affected with cholic and diarrhœa, and the children are suffering from the same complaint. (Gruel used according to the dietary.)’ ”

“ ‘October 25.—There is much sickness amongst the children and the old people. There are 33 cases under the care of the medical gentlemen. 96 inmates in the house.’ ”

“ ‘25th.—For some days I watched the result (of the gruel) which was given to the visiting committee as producing diarrhœa.’ ”

(Signed by the Medical Officer).

“ ‘25th.—*One hundred weight of oatmeal ordered.*

“ ‘Nov. 1st.—There is still much sickness.’ ”

“ ‘1st.—*Half-a-hundred-weight of oatmeal ordered.*

“ ‘20th.—Still much sickness.’ ”

“ ‘22d.—*One hundred-weight of oatmeal ordered.*

“ ‘Dec. 13th.—Much sickness is still prevalent in the house.’ ”

“ ‘16th.—*One hundred-weight of oatmeal ordered.*

“ ‘20th.—*Half-a-hundred-weight of oatmeal ordered.*

“ ‘27th.—*One hundred-weight of oatmeal ordered.*

“ ‘Jan. 3d, 1837.—The inmates again unhealthy, particularly the children, who have had the measles.’ ”

“ ‘10th.—*One hundred-weight of oatmeal ordered.*

“ ‘31st.—**GENERALLY** unhealthy.’ ”

“ ‘31st.—*One hundred-weight of oatmeal ordered.*

“ ‘Feb. 14.—**GENERALLY** unhealthy.’ ”

“ ‘14th.—*One hundred-weight of oatmeal ordered.*

“ ‘Thus the gruel cauldron and the diarrhœa, the cause and effect, were kept in full reciprocal action by the Board. There are intermediate entries which show transient improvements in the general health of the poor sufferers. On the 21st of February it is said, ‘Generally improved in health, but the diarrhœa is still *very prevalent.*’ This improved state appears to have continued but for a short time, when the fatal disease resumed its former virulence. During the whole awful period, comprised between

the first death from diarrhœa, which took place in September, to the end of the following March, the termination of the parochial year, the Board wilfully persevered in sending a regular succession of helpless victims to breathe the poisonous atmosphere of that pesthouse, saturated with the effluvia of putrid excrements, and to be GRUELLED in precisely the same manner as that which had occasioned such extensive suffering, and produced such fatal results. So far I have proceeded, either on the records of the Board, or on the testimony of its officers and members; I am now to commence on my own knowledge, having in the beginning of April taken my seat at the Board as one of the Guardians for the parish of Bridgewater.

“JOHN BOWEN.

“Bridgewater, Feb. 7, 1838.”

“Mr. Parker, the Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, ordered the master of the Loughborough workhouse to *divide a potato*, in his distribution of meals for the inmates, if an entire one exceeded the exact weight prescribed by the dietary for the subsistence of paupers.” — *Nottingham Review*, March 27, 1840.

“The Commissioners sent out the sort of diet we must feed them with; we found it *too small*, and had it increased, after a time, four ounces more of bread.” — *Mr. Ford's examination before the Poor-Law Committee*, March, 1837.

“Let me contrast the treatment of American felons with that of English paupers. I take my account from a well-known book, entitled *Historical Sketches of the Ten Miles Square, forming the District of Columbia, &c.*; page 208:—‘Rations and clothing of the convicts, as authorized by the regulations of the Penitentiary,’—1st, The ration for each man, per day shall be 12 ounces of pork or 16 ounces of beef (every day); 10 ounces of wheat flour, not bolted; 12 ounces of India meal;  $\frac{1}{2}$  gill of molasses; and 2 quarts of rye, 4 quarts of salt, 4 quarts of vinegar,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ounce of pepper, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  bushels of potatoes to each 100 rations. All to be good and sound, including a comfortable bed.” — *Correspondent to a Leeds Paper*, Aug. 1, 1838.

“A society exists in the parish of St. Clements, Ipswich, for the purpose of watching strictly the working of the New Poor-Law. At one of its meetings it was unanimously agreed, that Mr. John Scott, butcher, St. Clement, should be

the person to inspect the meat served to the Union-house; and the result of his first visit was, the discovery of a quantity of bull beef. We think every feeling mind will give credit for the discovery of such frauds; particularly as our suffering fellow-creatures are shut up with only 12 ounces of meat in the week; surely it ought not to be bull beef, and that of the very worst description.” — *Suffolk Chronicle*, Feb. 8, 1840.

“The boy, Daniel Simons, who ran away from the Stowmarket Union workhouse, in Dec., 1838, stated, that he and his brother had been so cruelly used, and so badly fed (he stated that resin was mixed with their skilly to keep it on their stomachs) that they resolved to run away.”

“CHRISTMAS CHEER FOR THE POOR. —The Poor-Law Commissioners, in answer to applications that have been made to them, have refused to sanction any extra allowance to the poor in the Unions that have been recently formed.” — *Morning Chronicle*, Dec., 1839.

“The parish of St. George, Hanover-square, has been the pattern parish of the Poor-Law Commissioners. It has been the disgraceful boast of the Guardians, that they feed the poor of that parish on  $15\frac{1}{2}$ d. per head a-week: and the noble example has been recommended by the well-paid Poor-Law authorities to the imitation of all England besides.” — *Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Nov. 24, 1838.

“POOR-LAW SOUP.—Take ten quarts of water and stir it with a rushlight till it boils; season it to your liking, and it is ready for use. The wick may be bolted.”

“It was said that many of the paupers had been seriously injured in their health, and that some of them had been nearly poisoned, by the food which had been there administered.” — *Lord Wynford, on the Bridgewater cases, House of Lords*, May 1, 1838.

“The general system of diet was principally as follows: the poor got for breakfast what was called porridge, but which was no thicker than ordinary gruel; to this they had a little treacle and water. They had one flesh dinner in the week. Two days they had what was called soup, made out of a beast's head; the weight of the flesh of this head averaged about four pounds; this served forty-eight persons for two days, allowing to each about three-quarters-of-an-ounce of solid food. There was no bread allowed to this soup.



In the afternoon they got what was considered and called a luxury, coffee, made with seven pints of water to one ounce of coffee at 1s. 10d. per pound. To this they were allowed seven ounces of bread; but many of the poor creatures had weighed it, and found it only five ounces. Boiled barley was also given for dinner; and he had the testimony of medical men to prove, that this article was so unwholesome to the people, that it passed through the bowels quite in an undigested state."—*A Speaker at a Meeting at Morpeth*, March 6, 1839.

"I was with a very eminent physician in London, who, when speaking of the 'diet table' of the Bridgewater workhouse, said—'Mr. Oastler, I have been carefully examining that table, and I have no hesitation in giving it as my opinion, that the Commissioners have employed professional men to devise a diet which might seem like food, but which would act upon the human frame as slow poison.'"—*Oastler's Letter to Lord John Russell*, March 3, 1838.

"I would have set up in every Union poorhouse, a patent digester, upon a new scale, and upon the most improved principles, such as the toughness of some of the materials may require. I would have every man, woman, and child, that shall die in the Union-houses, boiled down, and made into soup, which will be, I am persuaded, sufficient in quantity to support all the living inmates, if the fast days are as religiously observed as they ought to be; and in quality quite equal to the celebrated 'Black Broth,' the public meal of that great people and notable economists, the Lacedemonians. Still, after the flesh has been all boiled off the bones, it is manifest there will be an overplus—the bones themselves, which must likewise come within the 'appropriation clause' of my scheme. These bones may be partly manufactured into forks, and spoons, and ladles, for the use of the poor. The rest I would have regularly *ground*, made into bread, and distributed to the poor on Sundays. Treadmills may be here of great use, and thus will be accomplished the great scheme so long the desideratum of all philosophers—of *Grinding the poor for their own benefit*. I am here only taking into account the infirm and aged. Sickly and delicate constitutions will occasionally require something approaching to luxury. After, therefore, by a series of lectures, delivered under the sanction of the Poor-Law Commissioners, on the nature of

nutriment in general, in order to do away, as I observed before, the prejudices against different sorts of meats, and showing, by chemical and other experiments, that all nutriment is wholesome, and that is the great matter in all sorts—I think the sickly poor may be brought to relish the more tender food of infants and children, who must of course occasionally die in the 'Houses;' a regular certificate from the surgeon and registrar of deaths being just put up in some conspicuous place in the kitchen and eating-rooms, that they have not died of measles, no meats under such circumstances, being considered wholesome. I have been told by a retired sausage-vendor, that children under twelve years of age, particularly females, are as good and as tender as chickens.....I have here spoken only of the food; should there be at any time a scarcity, I reckon that much nutriment may be conveyed in the water drink. For instance, the solar microscope has sufficiently shown the immense number of living animalculæ in one drop of stagnant and green pool water. Such water must, therefore, be extremely nutritive, and such exclusively would I recommend to the notice of the Commissioners and Guardians of the poor. Horses like it best, and they are noble animals."—*A Satirical Article in "Blackwood's Magazine,"* April, 1838.

"I am fully aware that science has long been at work, and some admirable inventions are advancing to an astonishing maturity. I have recently attended the lectures of a great political economist, who performed the wonderful operation of making loaves of bread out of saw-dust—wherein it was fully shown that the poor may be made to 'lick the dust' with great advantage to themselves and the rest of mankind:—and the saw-mill for the tread-mill—and there never will be a lack of grist. I had scarcely recovered from my wonderment at this wonder of wonders, when it was declared, to the infinite satisfaction of a great number of Poor-Law Guardians present, that very good bread had been made out of granite—so that it is hoped the sciences may yet come, when, without shame, the poor shall ask for bread, and you shall give them a stone!!!"—*Ibid.*

"Whilst the gallantry of the Whigs has been so conspicuous towards ladies of high degree, whose patronage was essential with royalty, and therefore necessary to the preservation of place and

power now, let us see what has been their chivalry, and what their gratitude to the poor that are, by whose voices in full and irresistible acclaim they gained, and were enabled to preserve, power and place. The following is a starvation dietary dinner, meted out by Lord John Russell to able-bodied pauper women:—

For Dinner.		oz.
Of meat . . . . .	per week . . . . .	10
Vegetables . . . . .	ditto . . . . .	24
Soup ( <i>pork water</i> ) 3 pints . . . . .	ditto . . . . .	12
Boiled rice, or suet pudding . . . . .	ditto . . . . .	24
Bread . . . . .	ditto . . . . .	4
Cheese . . . . .	ditto . . . . .	

—*Blackwood's Magazine*, April, 1838.

“I have several times had bread shown me, at the time of receiving it, not half its proper size.”—*The Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath) in the “Times,”* August 25, 1840.

“I have gone frequently into the children’s school-room at their dinner time, and seen them drinking cold water (their gruel being pushed aside), and upon my inquiring the cause, have been told by the schoolmistress, that they could not endure the gruel, and that most of them preferred cold water.”—*Ibid.*

“I know a woman of unblameable character who, when she was in the house, could neither eat the bread nor drink the gruel that was brought her. She has accordingly left both her breakfast and supper, day after day, for weeks together, and has told me that she has frequently gone to bed and cried bitterly on account of her not being able to eat the food; that the porter, finding one day a large bagful of stale bread, which she acknowledged to be hers, said she should have no more until she had eaten it; to which she replied, her having no more would be no punishment, as she never could eat it fresh or stale. Others have informed me, that the bread made them quite ill, and that the gruel they all perfectly loathed. I have sometimes myself had the greatest difficulty in eating a mouthful of the bread. The gruel I have frequently tasted, but although a lover of gruel (and without sugar) I never could drink a spoonful of it, so excessively nauseous did I find it. I have asked the poor woman just alluded to, how she lived out of the ‘house,’ when she answered, upon a little good bread and a drop of tea, upon which she could rather live, and work from six in the morning till twelve at night, than be in the work-house and have the best food possible, so perfectly wretched was she there. Other

kinds of their food are also commonly very bad. In proof of which statement I give the following fact:—A short time since the inmates of the ward, containing between 80 and 90 in number, growing tired of the wretched stuff called broth, that they long had dealt out to them, and finding it one day a little better than peppered hot water, insisted upon seeing the Chairman, who, according to his daily custom, was at the time giving directions in the house. When he entered, they surrounded him, uttering their complaints, which, because he made light of, several of them threw their mixture all over him, exclaiming, ‘there, you may have the stuff for your dinner; we don’t want it, and won’t drink it, for you look thin, which no doubt comes from your walking about, and worrying and oppressing your servants at home, as you do us, every day.’”—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath) in the “Times,”* Sept. 15, 1840.

“CHEAP FOOD FOR THE POOR.—At a late meeting of the Board of Guardians of the Bolton Union, it was unanimously resolved to memorialize the Lords of the Treasury, praying that they may be allowed to purchase foreign grain duty free for the use of the paupers in the Union. The memorial is grounded on ‘the dearthness of provisions, the great scarcity of employment, and the consequent burdens on the rate-payers of the Bolton Union.’ It proceeds to say, ‘That, although a large portion of this year’s wheat crop has been so much spoiled as to make unwholesome flour, if used without a due mixture of good grain, such is the effect of the present prohibitory duty of 20s. 8d. per quarter on all foreign wheat imported into this country, that the poorer classes are forced to live on this unwholesome food, whereby disease and mortality are greatly increased.’”—*Champion*, Dec. 15, 1839.

“UNPARALLELED STARVATION.—A farmer, at Low Crompton, near Oldham, had cut into quarters, and buried, a cow, a few days ago, that had died from some natural distemper, but it had not been buried long before a number of his starving neighbours got to know, and came to request him to allow them to take it up, as they were almost dying of want. The farmer granted their request, and it was eaten as a most delicious morsel.”—*Northern Star*, March 7, 1840.



**THE CIRENCESTER UNION BASTILE DIET TABLE,\* AS PRESCRIBED BY THE COMMISSIONERS, COMPARED WITH THE FELONS' EATING AND DRINKING.**

CIRENCESTER UNION DIETARY FOR THE ABLE-BODIED.										DAILY ALLOWANCE TO EVERY CONVICT ON BOARD THE HULKS IN ENGLAND.									
Days.	Description of Persons.	Breakfast.		Dinner.			Supper.		Days.	Barley.	Oatmeal.	Bread.		Beef.	Cheese.	Salt.	Small Beer.		
		Bread.	Gruel.	Bacon.	Potatoes.	Soup.	Bread.	Cheese.				Soft.	Biscuit.						
Sunday .....	Men ...	7 oz.	1 Pint.	5 oz.	1 lb.	...	7 oz.	1 oz.	Sunday .....	0 lbs. 4 oz.	0 lbs. 3 oz.	1 lbs. 0 oz.	0 lbs. 4 oz.	0 lbs. 14 oz.	...	4 oz.	1 ½ oz.	1 Pint.	
	Women	6	1	5	1	...	6	1	Monday .....	0 4	0 3	1 0	0 4	...	4	1 ½	1		
Monday .....	Men ...	7	1	...	1	...	7	1	Tuesday .....	0 4	0 3	1 0	0 4	0 14	...	4	1 ½	1	
	Women	6	1	...	1	...	6	1	Wednesday ..	0 4	0 3	1 0	0 4	...	4	1 ½	1		
Tuesday.....	Men ...	7	1	...	1	...	7	1	Thursday ...	0 4	0 3	1 0	0 4	0 14	...	4	1 ½	1	
	Women	6	1	...	1	...	6	1	Friday .....	0 4	0 3	1 0	0 4	...	4	1 ½	1		
Wednesday..	Men ...	7	1	...	1	...	7	1	Saturday .....	0 4	0 3	1 0	0 4	0 14	...	4	1 ½	1	
	Women	6	1	...	1	...	6	1											
Thursday ...	Men ...	7	1	...	1	2	7	1											
	Women	6	1	...	1	...	6	1											
Friday .....	Men ...	7	1	...	1	...	7	1											
	Women	6	1	...	1	...	6	1											
Saturday ...	Men ...	7	1	...	1	...	7	1											
	Women	6	1	...	1	...	6	1											
									Each Convict per week...	1 12	1 5	7 0	1 12	3 8	12	3 ½	7		

The suspected thief (see the Gaol Returns from Lancaster) has, per week, 112 ounces of bread, 24 ounces of meat, 40 ounces of oatmeal, 5 ounces of rice, 4 ounces of pease, 4 ounces of cheese. In Winchester Gaol the suspected thief has 192 ounces of bread, and 16 ounces of meat per week. Solid food—203 ounces.

The convicted thief has 140 ounces of bread per week, 56 ounces of meat, 28 ounces of Scotch barley, 21 ounces of oatmeal, 12 ounces of cheese. Solid food—239 ounces.

The transported thief has 10½ pounds of meat per week, 10½ pounds of flour (which will increase, when made into bread to 218 ounces). Solid food—330 ounces.

\* How indignant it makes one to peruse this Cirencester diet of death, and then to read such a paragraph as this:—"It is computed that the produce of 7,000,000 acres of land is consumed in England by horses; the number of British horses is about 1,200,000, of which 200,000 at least are pleasure horses."—*Weekly Paper*, Dec. 14, 1839. Alas! for the poor, might and day sighs G. R. Wylken Baxter—and it grieves him he can but sigh for them—he may do more hereafter though.

"One of the beauties of the New Law was to be its uniformity, and as a specimen of such uniformity, I will here repeat what has been justly called the appalling contrast between the allowances to the London poor, and to those of Cirencester, in their respective workhouses:—

ALLOWANCE IN THE CIRENCESTER WORKHOUSE,  
FOR MEN, PER WEEK:—

Bread .....	98 ounces.
Bacon .....	5 "
Cheese .....	7 "
Gruel and Soup .....	9 pints.
Potatoes .....	6 pounds.

ALLOWANCE IN THE LONDON UNION, FOR MEN,  
PER WEEK:—

Bread .....	112 ounces.
Cooked Meat .....	21 "
Cheese .....	14 "
Suet-pudding, or boiled rice, with milk and sugar .....	16 "
Milk porridge and Soup	15 pints.
Vegetables .....	2½ pounds.
Beer .....	11 pints.

Besides this, the London poor receive an extra allowance, amounting to a feast, on the great holidays of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide; and are allowed a day's recreation out of the house once a-week throughout the year. The order, also, of separation between man and wife is relaxed in the metropolis"—*Mr. Walter's Letter to the Editor of the "Evening Mail,"* dated November 28, 1837.

"CIRENCESTER UNION.—The Guardians of this Union, it will be recollected, desired their Clerk to write to us on the subject of the table published in *The Dispatch*, regulating the quantity and sort of food to be given to the inmates of that establishment, and to deny what we stated, namely, that the male pauper had only five ounces of bacon with potatoes, on Sunday, for his dinner; and that the remainder of the week he received only one pound of potatoes and nothing more. We have since received another communication from the Clerk, enclosing a copy of the 'amended dietary,' and which table is now in force; and our readers will readily acknowledge, that in every gaol in the kingdom, felons are by far better fed than the worn-out English labourer, untainted with crime, in the Cirencester Union. This 'amended dietary,' as it is called, is signed by T. Frankland Lewis, J. G. S. Lefèvre, and George Nicholls, who direct that all persons 'who may, now or hereafter, be received and maintained in the workhouse or workhouses of the Cirencester Union, shall, during the period of their residence therein, be fed,

dieted, and maintained in the manner described and set forth; and that two copies of the order, printed in large type, shall be hung up in the most public place in such workhouse or workhouses.' The Guardians, notwithstanding their statement that the paupers had never been fed in the manner described by us, have not thought proper to reiterate their declaration, and the presumption is, that we gave the matter correctly. It appears clear to us, that the Poor-Law Commissioners have resolved to allow just such a quantity of food, and that of a coarse description, as will suffice to keep life and soul together, and no more; and yet it is attempted to retain the services of those men for a period of ten years longer; as though it were possible to squeeze a little more saving of rate, by pinching the bellies of the poor, and in order to show the gain to be effected by this hellish plan. Right glad are we that the country is up and stirring from one end to the other in the business, for if the Whigs succeed in their proposed object, every remnant of power or control will be taken from places ununionized, and the whole management of the poor centralized in the persons of the Somerset-house Bashaws, whereby the misery that is now inflicted by the Bastile system, will be spread far and wide. But let us allude to the 'amended dietary' of the Cirencester Union—a dietary partaking of the flint soup system. It now appears, that able-bodied paupers are allowed for breakfast seven ounces of bread and a pint and a-half of gruel; for dinner on Sunday two ounces and a-half of bacon (!) and a pound of potatoes; and for supper seven ounces of bread and one ounce of cheese. This is the sumptuous fare an able-bodied pauper receives in the Cirencester Union on the Sabbath-day. We now come to the other days of the week. On Monday, the poor man has for dinner one pound of potatoes, and nothing more! On Tuesday, he is allowed half-a-pound of potatoes and fourteen ounces of pudding. On Wednesday, the pauper is again gorged; for he has two ounces and a-half of bacon, and a pound of potatoes allowed him. On Thursday, the vegetable system is enforced, the 'able-bodied man' being allowed one pound of potatoes, and a pint and a-half of soup. On Friday, the niggardly Commissioners allow half-a-pound of potatoes, and the suet pudding; and on Saturday, potatoes and soup. This is the 'amended' dietary table; and in our opinion it is little better



than the scandalous order issued in December, 1836. We put it to any humane individual, whether an 'able-bodied man,' upon such a system, can experience the slightest amount of comfort. We maintain, that the situation of a Union pauper is truly miserable. Confined within high walls, without the association of his wife; or the chance of obtaining a sight of his children (whereas they are confined in a distant Union), he retires to bed in sadness, and rises in the morning to curse his hapless state. Englishmen! then, we say, petition against the accursed Whig measure, and suffer not the poor of England to be treated by far worse than thieves. Recollect, that in the City Compter, a prison scarcely five hundred yards from *The Dispatch* Office, even confirmed thieves are allowed six ounces of beef for dinner three days during the week, and a bellyful of excellent soup, &c., the remaining four days. 'Comparisons are odious,' and in this case, the one we have adduced, stamps the belly-gripping gruel system with infamy."—*Dispatch*, Feb. 28, 1841.

"I cannot repeat too often, nor can you too often observe, what the dietary at Cirencester is: nor, I again say, can you too often observe, that the salaries of the gentlemen who 'order and direct' a pound of potatoes as the dinner of each poor man in that house, five days out of the seven, have £2,000 a-year a-piece; while their 21 Assistants have each £1,500 a-year voted to him."—*Mr. Walter's Letter to Mr. R. J. Richardson (of Salford)*, dated Jan. 31, 1838.

"I took up a newspaper and read an account of an inquest, which had been held on the body of a poor woman, who had literally been starved to death. How awful this! and when the very crumbs that fall from the rich man's table might have saved her—the broken victuals, which his pampered menials waste and cast heedlessly away, have preserved her life—the provisions daily bestowed on his household brutes, his dogs and cats, have made to live! I took up another paper (it was the *Bristol Mirror* of April 3, 1841,) and what saw I there? Thousands of grisly skeletons, the visionary remains of those who have been murdered by the scant and gripping dietaries of the Bastiles, and who, for want even of that horrid sustenance, have died in the streets, and roads, and woods, and by their own delirious hands, each, with his and her fleshless fingers upraised, beckon me to

tell what I saw there. I do not wish to be what the friends and favourers of the Act call "violent" or "factious;" but I do wish to ask if such things as deaths from want, and the doings detailed in the following paragraph, ought to be—is it right that they should—is it natural that they should? Oh! that the Queen of this land would permit me to come—if it were only to crouch for a moment at her feet, and afterwards to be spurned away by her Whig courtiers,—if she would permit me to come, as humanity's advocate, and the friend of the helpless, into her royal presence, and there exhibit the long and grisly list of those her poorer subjects who, during the past winter have died—have been suffered to die for want of food, of very hunger and thirst, and to contrast that same list with the following chronicle of royal household dinners—to contrast the "look on this and the look on that,"—the wretched *home-made* pauper dying for lack of a morsel of food in the streets, and the foreign *home-made* rich prince, feasting on the rarest and dearest dainties, the cost of one mouthful of which would provide a whole famishing family with a week's daily bread: Oh! that her Majesty would but deign to let me thus relate the wrongs of her poor, foodless subjects, and the excesses of her thoughtless courtiers! It is with sorrow I pen this, but it is with anger it will be perused by *Him*, who seeth not as man seeth, and who has declared 'vengeance is mine, and I will repay.'—

"LUXURY OF THE BRITISH COURT.—Some idea may be formed of the extent of the establishment at Buckingham Palace, from the fact, that nearly thirteen thousand dinners have been partaken of, during the last month, at the tables of her Majesty and her noble guests, their suite and the household!"

This tells that every poor wretch who has died of want has been murdered—This proclaims that the glory of England is growing dim—that her once glorious name, because she was *good*, is fast departing away from her—and that the starvation of her poor and helpless, and the profusion and hard-heartedness of her high and noble, are but *types* of her decline, which foretell that her fall is not far distant."—*G. R. Wythen Baxter*, April 10, 1841.

"I am a great advocate for the right administration of the New Poor-Law, and I am fully aware of the necessity there is for keeping the dietary of the

able-bodied in the workhouse, below that of the able-bodied labourer out of the house; but I am no advocate for starving the poor, and making it desirable to the man who cannot keep himself, to inhabit a prison rather than a workhouse. The Lewes House of Correction dietary allows 5 ounces more of bread, besides a pint of soup daily, than that of the workhouse. I have made known these things to the Poor-Law Commissioners, and have also superadded the (to me) astounding fact, that though, in the memory of the oldest inhabitant, fever of a malignant and fatal character has not been known in our workhouse, yet since the introduction of the dietary now used, very many have died of typhus."—*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Mr. Pitman, Vicar of Eastbourne, to the Poor-Law Committee, March, 1837.*

"Mr. King, doctor to the Friston Union, Suffolk, says that the poor are starving to death by hairs'-breadths, and that they would swallow prussic acid, if he would give it them, rather than endure their present privations."—*Champion*, Nov. 24, 1839.

"In comparing these tables (the pauper dietary, No. 5, and the dietary, as it was previous to 1822, of the prisoners at the Penitentiary, Milbank) it will be seen that the allowance of the prisoners was  $10\frac{1}{2}$  pounds of bread per week, and 18 ounces of meat, whilst the New Poor-Law Dietary (No. 5) allows only 6 pounds 2 ounces of bread, with only 10 ounces of meat, or 3 pounds 14 ounces of bread, and 8 ounces of meat less. I am aware this dietary at the Penitentiary was reduced, but the consequence of the alteration, as reported by Drs. Rogers and Latham, and dated 5th of April, 1823, set forth, 'that the adoption of the new system was soon followed by a general decay of health and strength.'—*Day's "Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law."*

"There is dispensed, with economical prudence, to the poor of the Morpeth Union, abundance of savoury and delicious preparation of *sheep's head*."—*Blakey's Letters with the Morpeth Board.*

"The following extract from an advertisement from the Wolverhampton Union for a master and matron, is certainly a curiosity of its kind, and looks like a joke on any applicants that may offer themselves. 'The salary of the master £30 a-year;'—very good—'and that of the matron, £30 a-year;'—also very good—

'with double rations to each, of the diet of the able-bodied paupers.' The able-bodied paupers in Wolverhampton Union must be shockingly pinched in mere food, if a double allowance is deemed necessary for the support of the master and mistress."—*Plymouth Paper*, Sept., 1839.

"The Cirencester Board of Guardians are distinguished for having out-Heroded Herod, by an allowance of a dietary to the inmates of their workhouse, more meagre than any of the number submitted to them for selection by the Commissioners. These worthy Guardians are of opinion, that, for an able-bodied man, who toils from morn till night, five ounces of bacon per week afford ample animal sustenance."—*Northern Star*, April 7, 1838.

"It was affirmed, by the Commissioners, to be necessary, not only for due economizing, but really called for to preserve the *health* of the objects themselves, whom, the Commissioners affirmed, even if able-bodied men, would be over-fed by 24 ounces of food per day. Now the boys of the Sheffield Charity-school (whose under-feeding has sometimes been complained of, but their over-feeding never) have more than 50 ounces of food per day—morning and evening, milk porridge with the cream in—and meat dinners on five days in the week; yet many of them are not more than 8 years of age—none more than 13."

"Among the tricks resorted to in the Hereford Union workhouse to *exalt* the character of the establishment, and corroborate the superexcellence (!) of the victualling department, or '*tenders*, as 'they' call them,' is the keeping, for the reception of visitors, a *show-cheese*. Thus, when the tradesmen's wives and daughters, on holidays, such as Easter-Monday, Whit-Tuesday, &c. (their daddies—I beg pardon, their *papas* and *gentlemen*—having gone a-hunting), want to sink the shop for that day only, and to go and see 'summut' *amusing like*, they don those blessed yellow bonnets of theirs, with the red ribbons, and black feathers, tipped with orange and green, and set out on a gipsy party to inspect the 'Union.' 'Now,' says Mrs. Brown-Holland-Sheeting, the spokeswoman of the party, to the Governor, cutting her words as fine as hardly to give them bare measure, 'What sort of division—hem, how stupid I am—provisions I mean, do you give your paupers?' 'Oh, the very best of



everything, Ma'am, the very best,' replies the Master and Commander, according to his 'written instructions.' 'Do you, indeed! Well, that is *so good* of you! Do you know, Miss Maria Matilda Sophinisba Coffee-Snuff-and-Tobacco (addressing one of her companions), he says the paupers have the best of everything—the very superfine, love!' 'You don't say so!' 'Really now!' 'Indeed, well I am sure,' are immediately returned her in small change. 'They have indeed, Ma'am,' chimes in the Governor, taking off his hat, and wiping his head with a large yellow silk handkerchief, with great bunches of very red flowers on it. 'But you shall judge for yourselves. Here, John, hand down one of *them* establishment cheeses for the ladies to taste.'

"It is necessary to state, that the cheese which is thus submitted to the 'taste' of the fair counter-charmers is of a *very different* quality to the rest on the shelf of which the wretched inmates are *occasionally* 'allowed' to nibble small quantities—in fact, is the Union Workhouse Show-Cheese, which has been 'got up' especially for the refreshment of visitors, who, after partaking thereof, are respectfully requested to inscribe their names in a book kept for the purpose in the house, and to express, in fervent, glowing language, their *cordial appreciation* of the comfortable and liberal arrangements of the establishment, &c., &c., and &c., &c.

"Of course, the visitors in most cases know nothing of these delicate Somerset-house arrangements, and consequently return home in perfect raptures at the gratification they experienced in finding, after all the 'mischievous agitators' had said to the contrary, the workhouse to be 'really now, so uncommonly well conducted, and *sich* superior living!' 'No gentleman's house in the county (so the citizens of the *city of the snobs* express themselves) could possibly be cleaner, ejaculated *Mrs. Brown-Holland-Sheeting*, the next morning after her excursion already mentioned, as, in the way of business, she placed a box of Woodstock gloves before *Mr. Swallow-anything*, one of the softest of her regular customers, and who was supposed still to retain some *little prejudices* against the new order of Poor-Laws. 'Will you believe me, Sir, that the cheese which we lately bought of *Messrs. Mite-and-Rind*, at 11½d. a-pound—to be sure they are uncommonly high in their charges, no one can deny that—isn't *nearly so good*—no indeed, as that

the poor are allowed at our Union. It is a fact, I assure you, Sir, for I have tasted it. It was delicious! I only wish we could get as nice for our own use—yes, indeed! The paupers ought to be contented: but there, they are such a nasty, horrid, low set, Sir, that—Two pairs did you say, Sir? Thank you, Sir. Anything else, Sir, I could have the pleasure of showing you? But, as I was saying, Sir, those paupers are the most discontentedest set that,' &c., &c.

"So the fame of the *luxurious* living of the poor in the Hereford Union dungeon is circulated in that city by the incessant revolving of the tongues of weak, ignorant, over-fed and little-taught, shop-keeping women, and Whig Aldermen's *ungrammatical* and over-dressed wives; and should any one say that the cheese (the Hereford Guardians have declared *they will stand or fall by their workhouse cheese*—their Show-Cheese especially) wasn't better than the best Parmesan or Stilton that ever was made from milk, if a nervous man, the sooner he marries or turns Hindoo, as Shelley has it, and leaves the *city of the snobs*, the better for himself, and the equanimity of the Hereford Guardians (*vel geese*)."—*From a Hereford Correspondent*, April, 1841.

"Some time ago the Poor-Law Commissioners sent to our Union six dietaries, one of which we were to select to regulate the quantity of food to be allowed to the paupers in our workhouse. I made a motion that each Guardian be sent a copy of the dietary, to give him an opportunity of examining whether the quantity was sufficient, and at the same time I expressed my determination to add to the allowance, it being my opinion that it is too little to sustain life. This morning, Mr. Clive, the Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, attended our meeting: he asked me what alteration I intended to propose in the dietary? I said, 'a greater quantity of food, and that the paupers should have occasionally a little beer!' 'I am,' said he, 'directed to inform you, that whatever determination the Board may come to, the Poor-Law Commissioners will make no alteration in the dietary. They will not allow a greater quantity of food; they will allow no beer: in short, the Board must adopt one of the tables, without any addition.' My answer was, 'I was sent here by the inhabitants of this borough, as a *Guardian* of the poor of the borough. I will endeavour to see

that the money of my constituents is not improperly applied; but I will also see that those who are forced by poverty to apply to the parish for relief shall not be put on a quantity of food too small to sustain life. I have not yet, nor do I mean to consider the will of the Poor-Law Commissioners as to the quantity of food to be allowed to the paupers. I will exercise my own judgment, quite regardless whether the Poor-Law Commissioners are offended or pleased."—*Extract of a Letter from John Frost, Esq., Mayor of Newport, to John Walter, Esq., M.P. for Berks, Feb. 25, 1837.*

"BASTILE FARE.—At Hatton-Garden police-office, on Friday, Thomas Kates, a distressed looking man, with three children, (the youngest four years of age,) their appearance indicating wretchedness and starvation, was brought up in the custody of Samuel Daniels, a Mendicity officer, charged with begging. The prisoner made the following statement:—Some time ago he was in the employ, as labourer, of Mr. Thomas Tubbs, at Palace-yard, Tottenham-court-road, when his wife, after a lingering illness, died. Being out of work, and distressed, he went out to ask charity, when he was taken into custody, and the Mendicity Society gave him work, and relieved him. He was afterwards, by the parish officers of St. Pancras, removed with his family to his parish, Wallingford, Berks, a Union. On their arrival there they were received into the workhouse, where he was kept separately from his children, where once a-week he was only suffered to speak to them. He was immediately put to work, digging in a garden, and grinding at a mill daily; but finding that the food he received was not sufficient to enable him to do the work, he determined on leaving the Union, and coming to London with his family, in the hope of procuring employment and providing for them. He arrived in London in September last, and endeavoured to get trifling jobs; but being unable to procure permanent employment, on Friday morning he took his family out with him to ask alms, when they were taken into custody by the officer. Mr. Rogers sympathised with him, and ordered Daniels to take him to the Mendicity Society, in order that he might be relieved and put to some work. The prisoner was asked what quantity of food he was supplied with at Wallingford, by the parish authorities. He replied, 'Not near enough for any

man who was put to hard work, digging, and grinding at a mill. In the morning they gave him six ounces of bread, and a pint and a-half of skilligalee (gruel) for breakfast; five ounces of meat, four ounces of bread, and half-a-pound of potatoes, three times a-week for dinner; and on other days, 18 ounces of pudding for dinner; one ounce and a-half of cheese, and six ounces of bread, for supper."—*Northern Star, Nov. 24, 1838.*

"The Hanwell Guardians seem determined to ascertain the precise minimum of the human appetite, if we may believe a statement which has just reached us. A poor man, named Strange, a cripple, his wife and three children, were compelled to apply for relief to these worthies, and it was granted. 'To what extent?' inquires a reader. We feel our blood boil within us when we announce, that two quartern loaves were declared sufficient for the support of these five poor wretches for four days! To add to the brutality of this 'order,' poor Strange—a cripple, be it remembered—was compelled to walk from Hanwell to Isleworth and back (a distance of eight miles) before he could receive this pittance! Why? Each loaf was a halfpenny cheaper at the latter than the former place! For the sake of a penny they force a man, whose lameness prevents him from earning one, to walk this distance. The Rev. Mr. Emerton, the Overseers, and several other benevolent individuals, not only expressed their horror at the line of conduct adopted by the humane Guardians in open vestry, but most charitably and liberally subscribed to raise a sum which would release the sufferer from the fangs of such individuals."—*Weekly Dispatch, Nov. 25, 1838.*

"Mr. Wakley said, he desired to take this opportunity of calling the attention of the House to the dietary tables for the poor in the city of London. If he neglected to avail himself of that opportunity, one so convenient might not again present itself. They all knew that the object of the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act was to make provision for the destitute, and to take proper care of the funds of those who contributed to the payment of the rates. These objects, it was quite clear, could not be effected without some test of destitution. The bill also professed to introduce a system of uniformity throughout the whole of England and Wales. It was well known to hon. members that considerable inequality prevailed as to the mode of administering



relief, and that the regulations of the Commissioners had, in some Unions, been considerably relaxed. Amongst the advocates of the measure it was rumoured that the bill had ceased to be unpopular; they alleged, that its unpopularity was rapidly declining. In that House on Friday they had heard unqualified statements, to the effect, that its unpopularity had ceased altogether. When inquiry was made as to whether or not relief had been withheld from able-bodied poor, the reply was, that no such order had been issued by the Commissioners. From that, and other causes, it did happen that the bill was not so unpopular in the city as it was in most parts of the country, and it was therefore that they had not heard so much lately of the nature of the diet supplied to the poor. In most parts of the country it was well known that water-gruel formed the chief article of diet. Now, he wished to know whether the country gentlemen would sanction one system of diet for their own Unions, and quite another for the parishes in the metropolis. One thing was quite clear, that the allowances to the poor in the city of London were quite different from those which they received in other parts of England and Wales; and he should not for a moment hesitate to say, that if the House did their duty, they would have the Poor-Law Commissioners at their bar to render an account of their conduct in this respect. He hoped that the hon. member for Lambeth would turn his attention to the subject of diet. He was a warm advocate of the measure, though he hoped that Lambeth would not be affected by it. Neither that hon. member nor any other hon. member of that House could shut his eyes to the fact, that in many places water-gruel formed the chief article of diet. At Kensington the auditor refused the extra allowances granted by the Guardians, and they were under the necessity of defraying the charge out of their own pockets. On the various grounds which, upon that and upon other occasions, he had stated, he did hope that the attention of hon. members would be directed to this subject. It was disgraceful and disgusting that the poor agricultural labourer, after a long life of toil, should be cast into a dungeon, and placed upon worse than a gaol allowance, although his previous circumstances never had been such as to enable him to make any savings; and that the London mechanic, who frequently earned from

30s. to 40s. a-week, out of which he might have laid aside some surplus, should in his period of destitution be supplied with a diet comparatively good. In London, the men received on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, seven ounces of bread, one pint of milk-porridge for breakfast, seven ounces of cooked meat, three-quarters-of-a-pound of vegetables, and one pint of beer for dinner. Beer, as they well knew, was altogether withheld in country parishes. For supper, in London, they were allowed seven ounces of bread, one ounce and a-half of cheese, and a second pint of beer. The women received five ounces of bread and a pint of tea. Such was the diet supplied in a place where there existed no order for withholding out-of-door relief. Now, in the country, the poor were all but starved. In London the women received six ounces of cooked meat, three-quarters-of-a-pound of vegetables, one pint of beer; and for supper, five ounces of bread, one ounce and a-half of cheese, and a second pint of beer. On Saturday, the London paupers received 14 ounces of suet pudding, and, as he had already stated, the adult males and females all received a pint of beer at dinner, and the same at supper. Did he state this for the purpose of making any complaint that the diet in London was too good? Quite the contrary. He thought it only just and equitable that the poor should be fed in this manner; but how was it that the poor in the country were not equally well treated? The noble lord, perhaps, could not explain the matter, but the Poor-Law Commissioners might, and he held, that they ought to be called to the bar of the House for that purpose. Then, as to cases of sickness, the practice in London was, that the patient should be allowed wine or whatever other necessities the medical attendant might direct. How different from that was the state of things at Uxbridge, as appeared from the statement of Mr. Rayner! If the practice of the London Unions were just and proper, how could the practice of the country Unions be defended! Roast-beef and plum-pudding were given at Christmas, roast-veal, or roast-pork, at Easter and Whitsuntide, and on ordinary occasions, the diet which he had already detailed. With justice done in London, would the people submit to injustice out of London? The two systems could not both be right. The poor agricultural labourer had no chance in the country. While the London

mechanics possessed all the advantages of superior intelligence, of trade unions and combinations, they could protect themselves, and were not exposed to the same vicissitudes as the agricultural labourer. This was a serious question, and ought not to be shirked by the House; and if by the House, it ought not to be neglected by the country. He did not charge the Commissioners with dishonesty—he did not say that they were afraid to ill-treat the larger and more influential population of London; but one thing was evident, that a wide difference prevailed between the dietary of London and the dietaries of the country, and he held that the causes of the difference ought to be explained. It had been stated invariably, and the noble lord the Secretary for the Home Department, had urged it continually, that the object of the law was to make labourers independent. That certainly was an excellent object; but how did the Commissioners propose to carry it out in country places? They found the labourers there working at wages that barely kept them from starvation; and they said to themselves, ‘We must take care, in framing our regulations, that we don’t incite the labourers to enter the workhouses, and they must, therefore, be made one degree, and no more, above starvation point.’ But how, he should like to know, would wages ever be raised if such a system as that were pursued? Suppose, for example, a working man in the country were offered 6s. a-week wages, and were told, ‘If you don’t take that, you must go into the workhouse, and then you will have food worth only 2s. 6d. or 3s. per week.’ Of course he would prefer taking the wages of 6s. per week. But offer that dietary to the poor in the workhouse, and then he would admit, with the noble lord, that the Poor-Law would raise wages, because the poor man would in such case prefer going into the workhouse to accepting low wages out of it. He trusted the noble lord would see the utility of causing the dietary tables to which he had referred to be more generally used, and that his having read extracts from them in that House would have the effect of their being compared with the dietary taken throughout the country; and, if the discrepancies that existed between them could not be reconciled, that the Poor-Law Commissioners would be ordered to attend at the bar of that House to state why it was that such dietary tables had been framed for the city of London, and totally different ones

for the poor in the country. (Hear, hear.) He had another dietary table in his pocket, in reference to the children who were farmed at Norwood, which was equally as good as the one he had before referred to; but he would not detain the House by making any further observations respecting it. (Hear.)”—*House of Commons*, April 5, 1841.

“I see in the *Times* of this day a statement to the effect, that, in the Hartismere Union, a pauper boy named *Quentin*, between eleven and twelve years of age, having watched the mouse-trap set in the men’s attic, secured a mouse from it, and skinned, roasted, and ate it in the men’s sitting-room, and in their presence!!! Mott, the Assistant-Commissioner says, that the Governor of the Hartismere Union Workhouse considers this to have been a mere ‘lark,’ but a Mr. Rodgers, asserts that ‘it can be distinctly proved, and by a person (not a pauper) who interrogated the boy on the subject within twenty-four hours after the roasting, that hunger was his inducement for having eaten the mouse, &c.’ Mr. Rodgers goes on to say,—‘That a different version should have been obtained from a simple lad by an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner is by no means extraordinary.’ I know not whether Mr. Rodgers knows Mott as well as Mott is known in the parish of Lambeth, but if he does, he must know that a viler caitiff does not exist than the said Mott. In my character of Journalist, I have had several letters addressed to me describing the fellow’s horrible treatment of paupers and mad-people, describing him as a man who has realized an ‘independence’ by starving paupers, by driving them mad, and afterwards contracting for their maintenance as a keeper of lunatics, in short, as a man who has carried on a regular traffic in the woes and tortures of his fellow-beings. If the letters I allude to be true, (and I have no reason for doubting them), the oath of Mott ought not to weigh against any other man’s simple word of honour. A man capable of torturing paupers and lunatics (the latter of *his own making*) would be capable, not only of *falsehood*, but of any crime within the compass of human villainy, provided money was to be made by it, and that it was not cognizable by a Court of ‘Law.’ With these premises, I leave the public to judge between Mott’s ‘report,’ and Mr. Rodgers’s statement in the mouse-eating affair. But Mr. Rodgers does not leave the matter to mere



parole evidence; he has given facts and figures as well."—*Bronterre O'Brien in the "Northern Star,"* August 1, 1838.

"Mr. Blakey then showed the meeting, that the end and object of all these harsh and unjust measures were to reduce the amount of out-door relief. The workhouse was to be made into a place of punishment and suffering, in order that the poor might be deterred from applying for any relief; or if application were made, they might be obliged to take whatever was offered to them. This was 'carrying out the principle' of this most odious, unjust, and unmerciful Bill. There was, however, an apprehension that the poor creatures in the house would be getting too fat and indolent on the rich fare allowed them. To prevent this, that very ingenious gentleman, the Rector of Bothal, Mr. Parry, has kindly sent up a grinding machine for the poor workhouse inmates to toil at. And what, can it be conceived, is this machine to grind? Why, beans for his horses! This is a beautiful system—the poor man to be fed on gruel and wretched soup, without a particle of bread, to toil all day, to grind food for this fat Rector's fat horses! The speaker then showed how beneficial the little notice of these cruelties last week had been to the workhouse people. The Guardians had assembled early on Monday morning, and made a change of their diet, and allowed more bread, coffee at 2s. instead of 1s. 10d., but no pepper to be allowed. This was a confession worth something. The individual cases of hardship could not all be pointed out, but two would be selected. William Hunter, an elderly person, became affected with a bowel complaint. Dr. Shute ordered port wine and sago; the port was considered too dear, and gooseberry wine was given. The consequence was, that the poor man was carried off quickly. The next case was that of Ann Thompson, aged 27, who died on Friday last. She lived with her father, in the country; became afflicted with nervous debility; was taken from her father's house, crammed into the workhouse, and compelled to live upon the ordinary slop of the place. She was half-starved; and many of the poor people in the house had to give a share of their own miserable portion of bread to satisfy her hunger. The consequence was, that consumption was induced. Three or four days before her death, she was removed, by an express order from Mr. Parry, to another part of

the house, without the intimation given as to the propriety of this to her medical attendant; she soon died."—*Anti-Poor-Law Meeting at Morpeth,* March 6, 1839.

"A pauper in St. Giles's workhouse denies that he was allowed to feast *ad libitum* on Christmas-day, as stated in the daily morning journals. The actual cheer allowed, he informs us, was four ounces of brisket or flank of beef, half-a-pound of pudding, half-a-pound of potatoes, and a pint of beer, to each inmate. 'This,' our correspondent adds, 'was the fare doled out to gladden our hearts, and to celebrate the birth of the Saviour. What infamy it was on the part of the authorities, if they were applied to at all on the subject, to impose a false statement on the press; taking credit for a virtue they do not possess, and attempting to cajole the public into a belief that the Infernal Bastille is an *El Dorado*.'"—*Weekly Dispatch,* Jan. 6, 1839.

"Was it necessary that men, whom he would call foreigners, should come into a parish and take the management of the affairs out of the hands of those who were best acquainted with and most deeply interested in them, particularly when those foreigners were irresponsible? (Hear, hear.) He was no politician, but he protested against any Government, whatever might be its principles, sending their commission-spies into every parish. (Hear, hear.) They were told, that the poor were ungrateful. Long experience, in eighteen parishes with which in early life he had been connected, convinced him that they were not so. (Cheers.) Men became demoralized and drunken when they were neglected. (Hear.) Would they believe it, that under this New Poor-Law many medical men were employed at £100 a-year to attend 8,000 persons! (Hear.) It was impossible that they could attend them well, and they had this salary whilst the Relieving Overseer had £70 or £80. (Hear, hear.) How could the apothecary afford to give them good drugs out of such a paltry payment? And then again, a few lively leeches were sometimes required, but perhaps the expense of those had not been provided for, because it was considered that the Commissioners would sufficiently perform the sucking operation. (Laughter.) Lord Radnor had told them, that the poor were labouring under dyspepsia, arising from over-feeding. ('Oh,

oh,' and laughter.) If such were the case with the poor, he should like to know what must be the condition of the Aldermen and Commissioners? (Roars of laughter.) They must support the poor well if they meant to have work well done, and he need not tell them how much of the wealth and greatness of the country depend upon the labour of the poor. (Hear.) If they were fed upon the 'cheap and nasty' diet, which was not fit for a pointer puppy (hear,) how could they be expected to be able to work? How could they who were so treated in peace be asked to fight their battles in war? (Hear, hear.) Lord Brougham, when Henry Brougham, professed to be the poor man's friend, and yet he was the author of this cruel Bill, which seemed intended to drive the poor from the land. Lord Brougham seemed to think that no man ought to be poor. He (Dr. Proctor) would say that no man, whatever might be his talents or circumstances, was secure from poverty. Many of those whom he then addressed might be reduced from a state of comparative affluence, even by the non-payment of their bills by those whom they trusted. (Hear.) In conclusion, he wished to see the parish independent; and if after the trial they found they could not, as heretofore, do without the interference of the Commissioners, he would vote for putting themselves under them, but he would not blindly and without cause submit to be the victims of the arbitrary powers with which the Commissioners were vested, and which they might exercise whenever they pleased. (Loud cheers.) — *Dr. Proctor's Speech at the St. Bride's Parish Meeting*, March, 1838.

"Mr. Bowley presented to the Board the report of the committee appointed to examine the dietary. They had recommended a few alterations, which he was anxious to be made; they had heard many complaints from the inmates about the meat being given to them cold. The committee had recommended the meat to be given hot, and the broth to be warmed for the next day. The potatoes were recommended not to be put into the soup. The milk-porridge had been hitherto composed in the proportion of forty-eight gallons of water to twelve gallons of milk. They thought at least it should be half-and-half. They likewise recommended twice a-week that the paupers should have ale, and bread and cheese for supper; a pint for men, and half-a-

pint for women. To provide for the teetotallers, any person who preferred it might have their old meal of milk-porridge. They had also adopted the London plan of allowing paupers to go out to see their friends once every week. Mr. Need moved, that the report be taken into consideration next Tuesday; which being seconded by Mr. Tomlinson, was carried unanimously. Mr. Tomlinson gave notice that he should then move that three meat dinners should be allowed instead of two."—*Meeting of Nottingham Guardians*, May 18, 1841.

"A HINT TO THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS.—It would be worth while for the dignified dispensers of soup at Somerset-house, to advertise a premium among scientific men for the discovery of a new instrument, of the nature of a thermometer, which, by introduction of a flexible tube through the œsophagus into the stomach, should act as a meter of the quantity of food that had been conveyed therein during the preceding three days; and if, upon test by the said instrument, it should be found that any individual applied for alimment without having fasted at the least forty-eight hours, he should incontinently be kicked from the workhouse door as a sturdy rogue and imposter. It would be also adviseable, were the Commissioners to issue an *ukase*, ordering that no case shall be deemed one of urgent necessity, which the master of the workhouse is authorized to relieve in the first instance, unless it should be proved, by the application of the stomach thermometer, that the applicant has been in a state of perfect abstinence for the space of seventy-two hours and upwards."—*Sunday Times*, February 4, 1838.

LITTLE ENOUGH!—"The paupers at the Hereford Union (15 parishes) have, within the last three months, consumed 59,132lbs. of bread."—*Hereford County Press*, Oct. 26, 1839.

"CASE OF POISONING IN THE TOTNES UNION WORKHOUSE.—A woman, of the name of Searle, came into the workhouse from Staverton with an illegitimate child, about eight months old. On Friday evening last, when she was, as is customary on such occasions, placed in the probationary ward; and being afraid to sleep alone, a woman of weak intellect, named Peggy, who is a constant inmate of the workhouse, was allowed to sleep with her. On retiring to rest, they partook of some herb tea, and in the morning they were both found in a state of stupor, and apparently



dying, the child being quite dead, having been overlaid and smothered by them during the night. Mr. Gillard, surgeon, was immediately sent for, and gave it as his decided opinion, that both were labouring under the effects of poison. On examination, however, no trace of poison could be found. The tea was all drunk, and nothing was left in the vases. The stomach-pump was applied, and other remedies of a violent kind administered, but without effect, and both women remained during Sunday in a state of stupor, with but faint hopes of their recovery. On Monday morning one of the women was better. A coroner's inquest was held on the child, and a verdict returned of 'Died by suffocation.'—*Exeter Gazette*.—*Ibid*, Dec. 29, 1839.

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"TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

"SIR,—As the O'Connell cabinet may probably carry all the odious clauses of the unnatural Poor-Law, may I suggest to Lord John Russell, and other supporters of the measure, the propriety of being thoroughly Irish at once, without mincing matters, and after the example of the Irish Parliament of 1760, enact that 'the great number of beggars' children starving in the streets, and the great number of dogs, by which we are almost eaten up; to remedy both which it is ordained, that all the poor infants of the beggars shall be taken from their worthless parents, and be maintained by their parishes; and that the said maintenance may be rendered less burdensome, it is ordained that the constables and beadies of each parish shall, every Monday and Thursday, select out of their parishes so many of the fattest and most useless dogs as will be sufficient for the maintenance of the children, such dogs as belong to his Grace \*\*\*\*\* only excepted!'

"Surely this will be the next step taken, since two ounces of indifferent meat per week are grudged the poor.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
"E. B."

"Jamaica Coffeehouse,  
"Cornhill, March 22."

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"EFFECTS OF HUNGER IN PRODUCING DEATH AMONG THE POOR.—The subjoined extract is from one of a series of admirable letters on the New Poor-Law system, by a Mr. Bowen, which appeared in the *Times*:—"In Dr. Richard Baron Howard's 'Inquiry into the Morbid Effects of Deficiency of Food, chiefly with refer-

ence to their occurrence amongst the Destitute Poor, he states as follows:—"The public, generally, have a very inadequate idea of the number of persons who perish annually from deficiency of food; and there are few who would not be painfully surprised if an accurate record of such cases were presented to them. It is true, that in this country instances of death from total abstinence occur only casually, yet every medical man, whose duties have led him much amongst the poor, who is familiar with the extreme destitution which often prevails amongst them, and the diseases thereby occasioned, is too often a witness to fatal results from gradual and protracted starvation! Although death directly produced by hunger may be rare, there can be no doubt that a very large proportion of the mortality amongst the labouring classes is attributable to deficiency of food, as a main cause, aided by too long-continued toil and exertion, without adequate repose, insufficient clothing, exposure to cold, and other privations to which the poor are subjected.'"

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"In furtherance of the object of the projectors of the New Poor-Law, in giving only so much food as would 'sustain' nature, we can account for the trouble some wiseacres put themselves to in finding out exactly how *much*, or rather how *LITTLE*, would 'sustain nature;' and we are also led to admire the goodness of the Poor-Law Commissioners in furnishing us with that knowledge, in the shape of 'dietary' tables, and thus saving the Guardians, who, like the projectors of the Bill, may be disposed to increase the 'comforts' of the poor, the trouble of ascertaining how *little* is necessary to 'sustain nature!'

"Of these 'dietary' tables, there were six, each varying a little to meet the views of the most thoroughgoing 'political economist' in existence; giving to my Lord '*Cruelty*,' and others of his stamp, the opportunity of 'testing' whether nature could not be *sustained* with a *little less* than 'necessary.' For, my lord,\* I cannot suppose that, as 'economy' was the 'order of the day' with you in bringing forward the New Poor-Law, either of these tables gave *more than necessary* to '*sustain nature!*' I have elsewhere spoken of the poor being kept worse than 'convicts in the hulks.' As your lord-

\* Brougham.

ship will not believe 'without proof,' I here furnish the 'proof.' Pray, my lord, look well into the tables which follow. The *first* is the *New Poor-Law* 'dietary' table No. 3. The last, the *convict* 'dietary' table in the hulks.

FASTER DIETARY TABLE, No. 3. (NEW POOL-LAW.)											
Days.	Descrip. of Persons.	Breakfast		Dinner.				Supper.			
		Bread.	Gruel.	Cooked Meat.	Potatoes & other Vegetables	Soup.	Bread.	Cheese	Bread.	Cheese	
Sunday ..	Men ...	8 oz.	1 1/2 Pts.	Oz.	Lbs.	Pts.	0z.	2.	6	0z.	1 1/2
	Women ..	6	1 1/2	..	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2
Monday ..	Men ...	6	1 1/2	..	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2
	Women ..	6	1 1/2	..	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2
Tuesday ..	Men ...	8	1 1/2	8	..	..	6	1 1/2	6	1 1/2	1 1/2
	Women ..	6	1 1/2	6	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2
Wednesday	Men ...	6	1 1/2	6	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2
	Women ..	6	1 1/2	..	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2
Thursday ..	Men ...	6	1 1/2	..	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2
	Women ..	6	1 1/2	..	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2
Friday ....	Men ...	6	1 1/2	..	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2
	Women ..	6	1 1/2	Bacon. 5	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2
Saturday ..	Men ...	8	1 1/2	4	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2
	Women ..	6	1 1/2	..	..	..	6	1 1/2	5	1 1/2	1 1/2

“Old people of 60 years of age and upwards, may be allowed 1 oz. of tea, 5 oz. of butter, and 7 oz. of sugar per week, in lieu of gruel for breakfast, if deemed expedient to make this change.

“Children under 9 years of age to be dieted at discretion; above 9, to be allowed the same quantity as women.

"Sick to be dieted as directed by medical officer.

CONVICT DIETARY TABLE, IN THE HULKS.

Daily Allowance	Bread.	Beef.	Cheese	Biscuit.	Oatmeal.	Soup.	Beer.
	lb.	oz.	oz.	oz.	oz.	pts.	pts.
Sunday ..	1	14	..	4	7	1	..
Monday ..	1	..	4	4	7	..	1
Tuesday ..	1	14	..	4	7	1	..
Wednes. ..	1	..	4	4	7	..	1
Thursday ..	1	14	..	4	7	1	..
Friday ..	1	..	4	4	7	..	1
Saturday ..	1	14	..	4	7	1	..

“My lord, I had heard much about ‘poverty being treated worse than crime.’ I had thought such things impossible, at

least in England. The existence of the 'New Poor Law' led me to examine this point; I found at once that the *principle* of the Bill was odious—its *operation* cruel and revolting! and the conviction is forced upon me, that the charge is strictly true. Look at the above tables once more, my lord,—see your 'able-bodied' pauper made to subsist on 13 ounces of meat, during a whole week, 5 ounces of which are *bacon*. Then, my lord, cast your eye over the beef column of the *convict* dietary, and you see him with 14 ounces of *fresh* beef *four* times a-week!! One ounce *more*, at *one* meal, than your 'able-bodied' pauper is allowed for the *whole week!!* The *convict* with *three pounds and a-half* of fresh beef in a week; the *pauper*, 13 ounces, 5 of which are *bacon*! My lord, will you now believe, with 'proof,' that in this country, 'poverty is treated *worse* than crime?'

“Nor is it in the article of meat alone that the *convict* is better provided for than the pauper; no part of the convict dietary will suffer in comparison with No. 3. The pauper, be it observed, is left, after repeated meals of bread and cheese, to slake his thirst at the pump; but the convict, in such cases, has his pint of beer to refresh and strengthen himself with. As a proof that the convict diet is wholesome, I may state, that at the time I obtained the scale of *diet*, the number of convicts on board the hulks was 588; of these, *two* only were on the sick list. Can the same amount of health be shown to exist among the inmates of the New Poor-Law Bastiles? Among the convicts, my lord, ‘diarrhœa’ and ‘ophthalmia,’ the natural concomitants of low diet and confinement, are unknown. ‘Irish bacon-water broth,’ and ‘flour and water skilly,’ form no part of the diet of the convicts. When *they* have ‘gruel,’ it is of a good consistency, and is made with *oatmeal* and not with *flour*.

“They know not what it is to make a meal (a dinner) from ‘suet’ pudding alone, which, for the sake of economy or some other motive, has been made from the *grease* scummed from the copper after the boiling of Irish bacon!

“The note at the foot of the dietary table No. 3, is little less than a mockery. ‘Old people of 60 years of age and upwards, *may* be allowed, if deemed expedient to make this change.’ Who is to deem it *expedient*? My Lord ‘Cruelty,’ I suppose, in which case I say, Lord have



mercy on these poor old creatures. 'Children under *nine* years of age to be dieted at *discretion*.' Poor little innocents, it had been better for you that ye had never been born. I can readily imagine that ye will not be likely to suffer from surfeit. 'Above *nine* years, to be allowed the same as women.' I should say, my lord, that the authors of the dietary tables for the 'Unions' were not physicians; if they were, they deserve to lose their diploma for not *knowing*, or for *disregarding*, the requirements of *youth* or *old age*. Periods when much sustenance is necessary; in the *first*, to encourage growth and natural development; in the *next*, to support decaying nature. But I am forgetting myself; these are considerations altogether foreign to the *object* of the New Poor-Law."—*Anti-Malthusian Bloodsucker's Letter to the "Manchester Advertiser,"* Sept. 19, 1840.

"Pray, reader! mark the following table:—

DIETARY FOR CHILDREN UNDER SIXTEEN  
YEARS OF AGE.

Days.	Breakfast		Dinner.					Supper	
	Bread.	Gruel.	Meat.	Bread.	Potatoes.	Soup.	Cheese.	Bread.	Cheese.
Sunday.	4½ oz.	1 pnts	..	4½ oz.	..	..	1 oz.	4½ oz.	1 oz.
Monday	4½	1	..	4½	..	1	1	4½	1
Tuesday	4½	1	..	4½	..	..	1	4½	1
Wed. ..	4½	1	3	4½	½	..	1	4½	1
Thurs ..	4½	1	..	4½	..	1	1	4½	1
Friday .	4½	1	..	4½	..	..	1	4½	1
Sat ....	4½	1	3	4½	½	..	1	4½	1

It will be generally admitted, that at no time of life is the appetite keener than between the ages of 10 and 16. Towards the latter, in particular, growing boys and girls are quite ravenous. Now, it appears, that unless a child be sick, the above table cannot be legally departed from. And what a table! *Six ounces of meat and two pints of soup* in the week for a growing youth! No puddings! no milk! no beer! but the everlasting gruel, and the everlasting cheese, morning, noon and night. 'No matter, *whether the pauper be a puling infant or a hearty youth of 16, the pint of the one, and the ounce of the other, are doled out to each without respect to age*. It consequently requires no other experience than that possessed by every father of a family, to

pronounce such food to be as pernicious to the one class, as it is *insufficient* for the other."—*Bronterre O'Brien's Letter,* August 1, 1839.

"He stated, and he was determined that they should hear it, that they were much indebted to the *Times* newspaper for the part it had taken upon the New Poor-Law Bill. (Cheers and uproar.) He held in his hand a most important dietary table, published some years ago, and which he believed would never have seen daylight but for the *Times*. It was the pauper dietary table of the Cirencester Union, and it exposed the cruelty of intention, and the baseness in practice, of the Commissioners by whom it had been framed, and of the Guardians who had submitted to its orders. It had been put forth and sent to the Cirencester Union in 1836, and the only morsel of animal food which it gave to the poor, and which the Guardians had no power to increase, was 5 ounces of bacon on a Sunday. (Great confusion, and cries of 'Shame!') Now, since that time this table had been, it was said, amended, and to what did that amendment amount? Why to this—that the 5 ounces of bacon had been divided into two parts, and were served out to the able-bodied paupers and infirm paupers, and those above 70 years of age, in these portions—2½ ounces on a Sunday, and 2½ ounces on a Wednesday. (General shouts of 'Shame!') The cruelty in both principle and practice of those who framed, and of those who administered this law, and of their sub-agents, was sufficiently substantiated in his mind by the damning fact which these tables established. It was true, then, that the poor were put into the scale, in order to ascertain what reduction of food they could bear, and he himself was an evidence to-day that, though the inmates of prisons were also so weighed, they were not fed so low as were the inmates of the workhouse. When he himself was an inmate of Tothill-fields prison, where he had the honour to be placed in the people's cause, and for which he never had regretted or whined, he being a bulky chap had been weighed, in order to see 'how far the food would go with him.' And he fearlessly asserted that, at the present moment, the food allowed in that prison to convicted prisoners, was infinitely more than was prescribed for paupers in the dietary tables issued by the three kings of Somerset-house."—

*Mr. Cleave, Crown and Anchor Meeting, March 11, 1841.*

“Mr. Fletcher, of Bury, then rose. The toast, he said, was very extensive, and he should direct his attention to that branch of it which, as a medical man, he might be supposed to understand best. He felt the more inclined to do this because Mr. Assistant-Commissioner Power, in his evidence before the Poor-Law Committee, had challenged him to vindicate what he had said on the occasion of his (Mr. Power’s) visit to Bury. After paying the people of Bury the very gratifying compliment of saying, that his first difficulty occurred in that town, Mr. Power said some very wild assertions were there made with regard to the diet in the Union workhouses in the south, and that it was declared the food allowed in those workhouses was not sufficient to support a human being in full health and strength. And in reply to some leading questions from the chairman, Mr. Power added, ‘this was said by a person who, from his station and character, ought to have been better acquainted with the subject,’ and that he was a medical man. Now he (Mr. F.) had not only stated, that the food allowed in those workhouses was not sufficient to support a human being in health and strength, but he added, that he would stake his professional character upon the correctness of that opinion—(hear, hear)—and he was not at all inclined to withdraw that pledge. He did not think that he was so likely, in consequence of that pledge, to sacrifice his professional reputation, and the confidence of the public, as to be obliged, like one of their late townsmen in Manchester, to seek the degraded office of a Poor-Law Commissioner because he could not obtain support. The meeting would allow him to notice one of those barefaced and deliberate falsehoods which the Whig Commissioners and the Whig ministry never hesitated to use, whenever it could answer the purpose, even of a week or a day, or any period of time, though they were confident that it would be exposed within that short period; but it seemed as if Mr. Power thought that this falsehood might be of some years’ duration. He (Mr. F.) asked Mr. Power the question, he having given reason to suppose that a Union workhouse would be established in the parish of Bury, if there would be the same dietary as in the south. He replied, that the object of the Act was to establish uniformity. He (Mr. F.) thereupon exhibited to the people assem-

bled a meal according to the scale of the West Hamptnett Union dietary; and, after that, Mr. Power altered his tone of uniformity, and said the dietary would be adapted to the habits of the people in the different districts. He (Mr. F.) then alluded to the Unions in Yorkshire, which had been mentioned to him, and asked for their dietary. ‘Oh,’ replied Mr. Power, ‘you see how you have been misinformed. I assure you there is not a single Union founded in all Yorkshire.’ He (Mr. F.) then mentioned his authority, the *Sheffield Iris*, but on Mr. Power’s assurance gave no confidence to it. Now, according to the third report of the Poor-Law Commissioners, there were no fewer than seven Unions formed in Yorkshire three or four months before Mr. Power made this assertion at Bury, the object of which was to make him (Mr. F.) appear ignorant. (Hear, hear.) But suppose he had been ignorant, was he or any other private individual to keep pace with or to follow the tortuous windings of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and know where they carried this law, which was law at one time and not at another, and where every Union was established? It would be strange indeed if Mr. Power, a Poor-Law Commissioner, acting in a district in close contiguity, could be ignorant of the fact; if he were not ignorant, he asserted a deliberate falsehood in his evidence before the committee. After hearing Mr. Power’s assertion at Bury he (Mr. F.) could say no more, and he brought forward the dietary of the West Hamptnett Union. The meeting would remember, that this dietary had been brought forward in the House of Commons by the late Mr. Cobbett, and admitted to be correct by one of the sons of the Duke of Richmond. It was upon this dietary that he (Mr. F.) founded his assertion, that it was not sufficient to support a human being in health and strength; and it had since been made to appear so by their own officers, for the books of the surgeon of the workhouse, given in evidence before the Poor-Law Committee of last session, showed, that above 150 people were in the hospital, and 72 died in one year. Might he not, then, safely say, that he would rest his professional character upon the assertion? The parties died, too, of just that kind of disease which was most likely to be induced by insufficient diet. Very considerable pains had been taken to prove, by the surgeon’s book, that a variety of diseases prevailed, and the attention of the



committee was directed to that fact. There were 'senile debility,' 'decay of nature,' and different names substituted for old age. An old man required more support than a man in the robust part of life. It was the old men and the young children that were starved to death. A very great number of children were put down as having died of *bronchitis*, or inflammation of the air passages, whilst the surgeon admitted that none of the patients out of the workhouse died of that disease; the reason being, he was inclined to believe, that they had been very much reduced by the workhouse diet. In fact, Mr. Fletcher observed, the Poor-Law Commissioners determined to put the nation on short allowance. Mr. Mott was commissioned to form dietary tables, and he actually brought forward the short allowance table in Captain Parry's voyage to show the capability of his dietary to support human life. He forgot that when a ship's company were put upon short allowance, the officers were put upon short allowance too. (Cheers.) And if the aristocracy, the Duke of Richmond, and the Poor-Law Commissioners were put on short allowance, the people would be very willing to join them. (Hear.) Mr. Mott being commissioned to form this dietary, what did he do? He took the lowest quantity of food upon which the people could exist: he did not set to work experimentally. (Hear.) There was a very great philosopher to whom Lord Brougham had been compared, but whom he resembled just as an ape resembled a man—there was Lord Bacon, who always recommended experiment. Now he (Mr. F.) should like Mr. Mott, and all the Poor-Law Commissioners, to try the experiment of living upon bread and cheese and gruel for three months; and if at the end of that time they were satisfied with the condition in which they found their bodies, he (Mr. F.) would be satisfied with the condition of the labourers of England. Mr. Mott did not go to work experimentally. He got hold of the *Penny Magazine*, which taught him the quantity of nutritious matter in the different sorts of food; but Mr. Mott was not right as to their relative nutritious qualities. No chemistry could teach him that; that could only be learned by experience, and by observation. The late lamented Mr. Cobbett declared, that the knowledge that potatoes would not fatten a hog was worth all the chemistry, and all the philosophy in the world; but Mr.

Mott had discovered that bread had about one-third more nutritious qualities than potatoes. Having settled what Captain Parry's crew could live upon, he observed, that some of their food was animal food, which being not so nutritious as bread, his patients would not need so much of it. Now this animal food upon which Captain Parry's crew lived he (Mr. Fletcher) happened to know something about, through Lieutenant Hood, a lamented friend of his now dead, who was employed in the operation under Captain Franklin. This kind of food was called *pelican*; it was the flesh of the buffalo dried, powdered, and made into a paste with suet; deprived of all watery parts, it was a purely animal substance; and the North American Indians having discovered from experience that they could live longer upon a smaller quantity of this kind of food than any other, it was adopted. (Hear.) Mr. Mott had not only found out that this food was as nutritious as bread, but he had also discovered what quantity of it was consumed; he admitted it was a greater weight than his patients got, but then we eat beef and mutton, and they had bread and potatoes, and therefore the smaller weight was more nutritious than the larger. However, his patients, like Dr. Sangrado's, obstinately continued to die under his regimen. They had died in the West Hamptnett Union; they had died by hundreds in the Bridgewater workhouse, and he (Mr. F.) was only astonished that the parties who there starved them to death had not been indicted. There were some friends near him who recollected, that after the last Poor-Law meeting, when the delegates were assembled at dinner, he stated that the proper use of any subscriptions of money raised in support of the opposition to the Poor-Law Act, would be in indicting those parties for murder and manslaughter; and he believed Lord Wynford was of the same opinion. What could be done when the evidence of the surgeon proved that the patient had died from an insufficiency of food? Whatever kind of jury might be met with, the very exposure would be worth something, and it would be worth something to hear the charge of an English judge upon the subject. When Mr. Power was in Bury, they took an opinion upon the right of indicting him (Mr. Fletcher), for he had said not only that they dared not bring the question into a court of law, and before an English judge, and an English jury, but that he

would punish the person who dared to separate his wife and family from him, and that if he were put upon the diet of the Union workhouses he would take food wherever he could find it. (Cheers.)"—*Halifax Meeting*, August 28, 1838.

#### "DUDLEY DIETARY TABLES.

"The BISHOP OF EXETER had to present a petition from the Guardians of the Dudley Poor-Law Union. They prayed to be protected from the extraordinary powers granted to the Poor-Law Commissioners, either by abrogating or by materially abridging those powers; and the petitioners prayed also that all Boards of Guardians might be at liberty to provide for the poor according to their own discretion, because they thought that the Poor-Law Guardians, who were living among the people, were the best judges of what, in each district, was fit and proper nourishment for them. There was much dissatisfaction felt by the Guardians, at the dietary-table sent down to Dudley, because they considered that it was not such as could sustain life, or could render the person receiving it fit to renew his work on his discharge. The Dudley Guardians subsequently became acquainted with the dietary-table used in the City of London Union; and they found it so much more generous and liberal than their own, that they, without scruple, adopted it, and announced their determination to the Commissioners, who, probably with great propriety, checked and reprimanded them for adopting it without consulting them; and they added, that the London tables had been allowed only for a short time, and under peculiar circumstances. The Guardians, however, from their local knowledge, being aware that the dietary-table sent by the Commissioners was not a proper support for the inmates of their workhouses, persevered in giving what they deemed a fitter diet, and persisted in their resolution of having the City of London dietary-tables. The Commissioners told them, that if they did this the master and matron of the workhouse, who had no right to act in disobedience of the Commissioners' orders, would be dealt with by them in such a manner that neither the power nor the orders of the Guardians would protect them, and that they would be ordered to be displaced. This, of course, called forth a strong remonstrance on the part of the Guardians, who said, that so far from the nature of the case requiring an additional allowance to the

paupers in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, the fact was the very reverse; for that the working men in the neighbourhood of Dudley were subject to harder labour, to which they had been brought up from their youth, and were accustomed to substantial diet; but that their strength would not be kept up with the proposed allowance, and that until they obtained for the working men the necessary allowance of food, the Guardians declared that they would not relax their exertions for the discharge of what they considered their duty to God and man. At the time the remonstrance was drawn up, no answer had been given to the Guardians' last letter; but since that time he believed that a Deputy-Commissioner had been sent down, and something had been done, but nothing which was satisfactory to the Guardians. On three days in the week they had this diet:—21 oz. of bread per diem,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of cheese, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pint of gruel. This was all they received on three days. On one other day the allowance was 20 oz. of bread,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of cheese,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pint of soup, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pint of gruel. On two other days, which were signalized as meat days, the allowance was 5 oz. of cooked meat, 1 lb. of potatoes, 14 oz. of bread,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of cheese, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pint of gruel; and on the seventh day, instead of meat, each had 7 oz. of bacon. Now he would beg their lordships to compare that dietary with the one in use in the City of London Union. On three days in the week the allowance was 7 oz. of cooked meat,  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. of vegetables, 1 lb. of bread, 2 oz. of cheese,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of milk porridge, and one pint of beer at dinner, and another pint at supper. On three other days the allowance was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pint of soup, made of good materials, with one pint of beer and the other articles; and on the remaining day, instead of meat or soup, the allowance was 1 lb. of suet pudding, or boiled rice, and bread. He had thought it his duty, before he mentioned the case to their lordships, to give notice to the Commissioners, and also to consult an eminent physician in London, who had attended one of the largest hospitals in the country. That physician had told him that the dietary table furnished to the Dudley Union was not sufficient to sustain the body of the pauper in health. Nor did he think it sufficient to prevent him from falling into disease, nor sufficient to keep him in a condition to resume his work; neither did he think it right entirely to



exclude this class of persons from the use of beer. He considered the dietary-table of the City of London Union sufficient, but not too profuse. He had also inquired into the ordinary dietary allowed at St. George's Hospital, and he found that the ordinary diet, which was not the full diet given to a person advancing towards recovery, but was only to sustain the patient in his present state, was a pint of tea, a quarter-of-a-pint of milk, six ounces of meat roasted, and half-a-pound of potatoes, these six ounces of meat being just half the full diet. At supper the allowance was one pint of gruel, half-a-pint of milk, and during the day 12 oz. of bread, and one pint of beer daily. Such was the difference in the three systems of diet; and the Guardians of the Dudley Union implored their lordships to allow them the control over the dietary-table; and after the experience they had had of the want of discretion, perhaps want of knowledge, on the part of the Commissioners, that the Legislature would make such alterations as would enable the Guardians to do that which their duty to God and man required. The petition was signed by 28 Guardians; there were in all the Union 27 appointed Guardians, and three *ex-officio* members of the Board. The three *ex-officio* Guardians had signed; but two of the appointed Guardians had, from accidental circumstances, not signed; but the Board was unanimous upon this subject, and they entertained a very strong opinion upon it.

"Lord BROUGHAM entered his protest against the measure being condemned upon such statements as the present; but he could not sit down without stating his total dissent from what had been assumed, and only assumed, because it had never been argued, and still less proved, that extraordinary and unprecedented powers were given to the Central Board of Commissioners, or to the Guardians. He denied that any one power, or any one authority, had been conferred on any of the newly constituted authorities, which was not in existence under the old law, since the time of Elizabeth, with this material difference only, that previously these powers existed and were exercised irresponsibly, unsatisfactorily, irregularly, and in the dark.

"Viscount MELBOURNE understood that with regard to the complaints of the Dudley Board of Guardians, the dietary-table was accepted by them out of two or three submitted to them by the Poor-

Law Commissioners, and which had been collected from those parishes which appeared, before the passing of the Poor-Law Act, to have paid the greatest attention to the subject. That dietary was acted upon till the Board of Guardians read in the newspapers the dietary of the City of London Union, when they desired to adopt it. To this the Poor-Law Commissioners, as he thought justly, objected. They stated that the London dietary was only temporary, that it had not been sanctioned by them, and that it was only adopted under the particular circumstances of the London Union. The paupers in London were not yet collected into Union workhouses; they were provided for by contractors, and the Commissioners had not yet assumed the guidance of the workhouses; the Commissioners did not approve of the dietary-table in use; it was only temporarily in force; it was not intended to be permanent; and being thought by the Commissioners to be too large, it had not received their support or approbation. This was the simple case. With respect to the Dudley dietary-table itself, he would not then enter into a discussion on its sufficiency or insufficiency; but he must say, that he did not think that the opinions of medical men on this subject were always the best which could be attended to, for this was a dietary for persons in health, and medical men were more conversant with that for persons who were sick.

"The Earl of WINCHILSEA, having given his support to the Bill when before the House, would offer only a few observations, especially as he would have another opportunity of stating his opinions when the whole question was before them. He confessed that he attached much importance to the prayer of the petitioners, for, in his opinion, it would be a very advisable measure to place the dietary entirely under the control of the Guardians, who were most interested in the welfare of those about them, and that the Commissioners should not be allowed to interfere. There was also another point on which he was decided that alterations ought to be made, and this was in respect to allowing the Guardians power to administer out-door relief.

"The Earl of RADNOR differed altogether from the noble earl on both points which he had urged, relating to the diet and to the giving of out-door relief.

"The Marquis of SALISBURY said, that notwithstanding the inconvenience of

discussing such questions as this on petitions, he could not refrain from stating, that from his experience every attention was always paid by the Poor-Law Commissioners to the representations that were made to them respecting the operation of any rule that was established in any of the Unions. Whenever a case was made in which it satisfactorily appeared that a relaxation of those rules would be just, the Commissioners had always most readily acceded to any proposal to that effect.

“Earl STANHOPE would call upon the noble and learned lord opposite (Lord Brougham) to state whether there was ever an instance, in any former period of the history of this country, of any body of men being empowered by law to frame rules, orders, and regulations, which were to have the force of an Act of Parliament, such as these Poor-Law Commissioners had the power to do? It was stated, that these Commissioners were responsible to the public; but they were neither responsible to the Government nor Parliament. These rules, now complained of, never had obtained the sanction of the Government or of Parliament.

“The Duke of RICHMOND had always been of opinion, that they ought not to give better dietary to the poor in the workhouses than the labourers obtained out of it. He admitted, that it would be a good thing if the wages of labourers could be raised to an amount that would enable them to live better, and bring their families up better than they now did.”—*House of Lords, March 17, 1838.*

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHAMPION.

“SIR,—I hasten to lay before you the particulars of the treatment which three working men experienced from the Governor of the workhouse at Macclesfield, and who belonged to the parish of Ashton. The facts of the case were detailed before a select vestry at Ashton. One of the men wantonly insulted, for there could have been no difficulty in allowing him the privilege of a spoon, if it were not intended to insult or drive him ‘to his own resources,’ stated, that being in want of employment, which they had been anxiously seeking for without success, these three applied to the Governor of the Union workhouse, on a cold and dreary night, for shelter from the winter’s blast. After some hesitation, he consented, and being in want of food, in a little time a can was brought to them, containing a portion of porridge left by the inmates of the house. There

was no other description of food with the porridge, nor even a spoon to eat it with; and when the Governor was asked for even this latter luxury, ‘Oh, no; we never allow anything!’ The poor men were then driven to the necessity to eat the porridge as they may with pieces of a stick, which they had broken for that purpose. I think I need not offer another word on the horrid degradation to which the honest, hard-working people are subjected.

“I have sent a letter to the Governor, asking if he had his commands from the Commissioners, but he has not yet replied to your obedient servant,

“MOSES CHAPMAN.”

—*Champion, Jan. 26, 1840.*

“DEATH FROM STARVATION.—The cases of immediate death from starvation are comparatively rare. The mode in which deficiency of food occasions death among the poor is by gradually wasting and destroying their constitutions, and predisposing them to diseases and complaints, by which apparently and immediately they are carried off. The multitudes of such cases are great beyond belief; and the instances in which persons among the poorer classes have their strength undermined, and are incapacitated both in body and mind by the habitual deficiency and inferiority of food, though their death, perhaps, is not occasioned by it, are still more numerous, and not less injurious consequences to the well-being of the state.”—*British Critic.*

“RECEPTION OF LORD MORPETH AND SIR GEORGE STRICKLAND AT HUDDERSFIELD.—In pursuance of their intention (the walls at Huddersfield having been previously placarded to that effect) the noble lord and his colleague left Leeds for the former place in his lordship’s travelling carriage. Three o’clock was the hour at which these unworthy and unwelcome visitors were expected, and consequently crowds were assembled to receive them. They did not arrive, however, until after five, when their reception was far different from that they had contemplated. In Huddersfield the New Poor-Law is peculiarly obnoxious to all classes, and, as a consequence, they do not hesitate to show their detestation and utter abhorrence of the men who could attempt to force such an abominable and impracticable measure upon them, and the next moment be mean enough to ask them for their votes, that their liberty might be



thereby more effectually withdrawn from them. It was known that his lordship and Sir George would address the people from the window of the Rose and Crown. Accordingly, on the noble lord presenting himself at the window, he was rather disagreeably surprised at seeing a small piece of bread and cheese (the exact weight, as apportioned by the Poor-Law Commissioners for the diet of able-bodied paupers) stuck on a fork at a corner of the window. His lordship viewed it for a moment, and taking it from the window, threw it disdainfully from him. This discomfiture of the noble lord was the signal for the expression of that disapprobation with which the congregated thousands (many having come into the town from the adjoining villages,) view the odious Poor-Law and its authors. The deep, determined, but honest and manly avowal of their dislike of the two candidates was vented in hootings and execrations. It did not, however, prevent the noble lord from repeating probably the same speech over again that he delivered at Leeds in the morning, for his lips were seen to move, but not a syllable was heard. He was followed by Sir George Strickland, in the same manner, and to the like effect. After remaining about an hour at the window, both Lord Morpeth and Sir George Strickland withdrew, under a salute of hissings and hootings, such as ought to deter them from ever entering the town of Huddersfield on a similar errand."—*Times*, July 20, 1837.

"GOOD NEWS FOR THE POOR.—At a late meeting of the Guardians of Keighley, an applicant, commonly called a pauper, presented himself to the notice of the Board, and requested a little relief. On being questioned in the usual manner about what he had to live upon, he frankly told them it was two shillings and sixpence per week, but he found it insufficient, and hoped they would add a little to it. One of the Guardians, who had once been wretchedly poor himself, appeared astonished at the man's request, and told him, that a person with an income of two shillings and sixpence per week, had no reason to come there, as he would very soon prove that it would not only support him comfortably, but leave him a very handsome surplus at the end of the week, if managed with economy. In proof of this, he told him that he had nothing to do but to buy two-pennyworth of oatmeal, and a halfpennyworth of old milk a-day. The oatmeal,

divided into three parts, would make three good basins of porridge, and the milk divided in the same manner of one-third part to each dish would act as a beverage, and thus furnish him with three substantial meals a-day at the low rate of two-pence-halfpenny. His victuals would consequently only cost him about seventeen pence a-week, leaving him thirteen pence clear—a sum which, if taken proper care of, would serve him on some future occasion, when he might, perhaps, be in a state of real want. After this charitable advice the man was dismissed, and the whole assemblage of Solons forming the Board, seemed highly delighted with the penetration of their brother, who could teach the poor man how to save a fortune out of two shillings and sixpence per week! The above is a fact, and shows with what rapid strides the march of economy is progressing since the introduction of the New Poor-Law."—*North-ern Star*, Feb. 16, 1839.

"That determined and consistent opponent of the New Poor-Law, Mr. Day, one of the members of the Board of Guardians of the parish of St. George, Southwark, has resumed his letters to the *Times* on the cruel working of this atrocious law, from one of which we make the following extract:—

"William Williams, now resident in the parish of St. George, Southwark, is 63 years of age, and his wife 64, and burdened with an afflicted idiot daughter, aged 37, the health of the mother also being very indifferent. Williams belongs to the parish of Seasalter, near Canterbury, in the Blean Union. He is well known to have been a sober, industrious man; has been in good business, and paid poor's rates for a considerable time. Having been unfortunate in business (as it is understood, without any fault of his own), he became so reduced about two years and a-half ago as to be compelled to go into the New Blean Union Workhouse, which, as will presently appear, would with propriety be denominated the 'Blean Union Prison.' Williams remained in that place about three weeks, when he determined, though old and feeble, to make a desperate attempt to leave his place of confinement, where he was, a matter of course, separated from his wife and daughter, after having been married nearly 40 years. He by some means

managed to get to London, and, after a considerable effort and great suffering, he got together a few customers, whom he supplied at their houses with small quantities of greens and potatoes. In this way, through much difficulty, he has contrived to exist for nearly two years, having been during the winter, and at other times, so thinly and miserably clad and covered as to excite the pity and commiseration of all who observed his sober, industrious, and persevering determination to maintain himself, and wife, and daughter, without parish assistance. Having by this time got behind, and so much in difficulty as to make a little assistance indispensably necessary, he applied to me, as one of the Guardians of the parish he resides in, to write a letter for him to the Blean Union Guardians, requesting a loan of 20s. or 30s. to enable him to go on, and to get him through the winter. Knowing his character so well, and having had my eye upon him almost ever since he came to London, I cheerfully complied with his request, and informed the Blean Union Guardians exactly how he was situated, remarking, that it would save this worthy man and his family from destruction, and reminding them that it must be the best policy as regarded the interests of the parish; because, otherwise, however unwillingly, he must, with wife and daughter, be passed home. To my letter I received the following reply:—

“‘Canterbury, 5th September, 1839.

“‘Sir,—I am directed by the Board of Guardians of the Blean Union, in answer to yours of the 3rd instant, requesting relief for a family of the name of Williams, to acquaint you, that they have many applications of a similar nature, but have come to the determination to grant no relief out of the Union.

“‘I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
“‘W. SLADDEN, Clerk.

“‘Mr. John Day.’

“Having communicated my fruitless attempt to the poor fellow, he said, ‘Let the consequences be what it might, he would never go down into the Blean Union workhouse again, to be imprisoned for the remainder of his short life; for he would rather die in the streets than undergo the separation and privations of that place.’

“Williams states, that when in this Blean Union Bastile, two years and a-half ago, a man of the name of Bailey was Governor (formerly in the army), who it seems was considered to be well calculated to do the dirty work of his masters. Williams positively asserts, that the quan-

tity of food given was by no means sufficient, that meat was given only twice a-week, then about two ounces each time in pudding. That no beer or tea was allowed except to those above 60, and therefore nothing to drink but water. Also, that the bread in quantity was not anything like enough. He states, that some of the younger men, who were set to work in a field at the back part of the workhouse, found the quantity so insufficient, that he has seen them, from hunger, frequently eat potato peelings. That none were ever permitted to go out at any time, either Sunday or week-day, and could only do so (as he did) by giving notice to go for good, and altogether. Who will say this is not perpetual imprisonment? Again, he observes, that no relations or friends were permitted to see the inmates but once a-week, at the doorway, in the presence of the Master or Governor, who at all times prevented them receiving anything from visitors; that tea, sugar, or the most trifling article, was not allowed to be accepted. In proof of this Williams states that, whilst he was there, he knew an inmate, who, being above 60, had his ounce of tea and four ounces of sugar weekly; that he had a family and a wife younger than himself there, and, considering she required the tea more than he did, though she was under 60, he contrived to let her have it, and did without it himself; for this offence he was deprived of the tea and sugar, by an order, for three months, (that is, his own allowance). He further states, that on one occasion, when the men were working in the field (before referred to), a gentleman sent them a little beer, about half-a-pint each, but it was immediately ordered to be sent back by the Master, and that when the gentleman expostulated, the Master declared he was only acting according to his positive orders, and agreeable to the rules of the Poor-Law Commissioners.”—*Champion*, Sept. 15, 1839.

“A successful method of converting stones into bread has been transmitted to the New Poor-Law Commissioners, and a three-and-sixpenny medal presented to the ingenious discoverer thereof.”—*Comic Almanac*, 1835.

“I perhaps may be able to throw some light upon the representations of Guardians and their published diet-tables; you will find in their tables broth appointed for supper three times a-week;



now<sup>w</sup>broth, in the proper sense, forms no part of the diet, it is merely the water (with the trifling addition of a few herbs) in which the meat has been boiled for dinner; broth, in the common acceptation of the word, is the liquor of meat thoroughly stewed, and consequently the virtue extracted; if, therefore, such is the nature of the workhouse broth it must necessarily follow that the five ounces of meat allowed for dinner can contain little or no nourishment, but as I understand that the meat is rather boiled than stewed, it follows that *pot-liquor* rather than broth should appear on the diet-scale of the Droxford Union."—*Rev. Stephen Butler's (of Soberton) Letter to the Rate-payers of the Droxford Union.*

"Much has been said on the subject of pork-water; and a feeling of disgust having been excited at the idea of such a wash being forced upon the workhouse inmates, it will perhaps create some astonishment when I state, that *bacon-water*, and not broth, seems to be the diet for Wednesday evenings; and, as this has been a subject much disputed, I give nearly verbatim a conversation which took place in the workhouse, in my presence, on Saturday, March 3, (1838). Mr. Harrison was asked, what the broth for supper on Wednesday evening was made of: he answered, the meat cooked for dinner; the question was put again, and the same answer returned, which Mr. Harrison said he thought a sufficient reply. He was then asked the description of meat; he replied, bacon—*Irish* bacon? Yes. Is there anything besides the water in which the *Irish* bacon is boiled? Yes; the meat ordered for the sick is boiled with the bacon. I afterwards learned, that the fresh meat cooked for the sick must have formed a very small proportion; and therefore, after the above statement, I leave it for the rate-payers to decide whether *bacon-water* does not form part of the dietary of the Droxford Union?"—*Ibid.*

"The pea-soup appointed for dinner three days in the week, though not so unpalatable as the *bacon-water* or *skilly*, is by no means of sufficient substance or strength to form a suitable meal, without the addition of bread, meat, or vegetables. I questioned Mr. Harrison minutely as to the composition of that soup; his statement is, that in making it for about 100 or 120 persons, he uses half-a-bushel of split peas, and adds two gallons of liquor to the water in which they are boiled;

on consideration, I find it difficult to account from what source these two gallons are derived, unless from the savings of the beef or *bacon-water*."—*Ibid.*

"As to the gruel, or *skilly*, used daily for breakfast, its composition is, according to the master's statement,—9 lb. of flour boiled in a sufficient quantity of water to dole out  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pint to 100 or 120 persons. Having tasted it myself I can only say, I should undoubtedly join those who prefer slaking their thirst with cold water after a breakfast on dry bread. As cheese appears on the diet-scale, I would merely observe, that the quality of those cheeses which I tasted appeared to be of a very inferior description."—*Ibid.*

"I have twice seen the Governor of the jail here (Bath). I learned from him, that the bread in the prison is infinitely superior to the workhouse bread."—*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath) to the Author*, dated Oct. 23, 1840.

"On Tuesday evening the effigies of Mr. Thomas Day, and his lady, were burnt in front of their residence. The fault committed by the lady was a report that she had stated that *nettles and coarse bread* were quite good enough for the labouring classes."—*Leeds Intelligencer*, June 23, 1837.

"Mr. Hindley complained of the dietary of the poor, as dictated by the three kings at Somerset-house, and instanced the case of a parish between Margate and Ramsgate where the paupers were limited to the starving point."—*House of Commons*, July 15, 1839.

"BRENTFORD PETTY SESSIONS.—MONDAY.—George Anderson and James Christopher Glenning, two of the paupers of the Uxbridge Union, were charged with the following offence in the workhouse of that Union, at Isleworth. It appeared, from the evidence of the witnesses, that, about half-past one o'clock that morning, as police constable Cussan, T. 157, was on duty in the Twickenham road, near the Union workhouse, he saw sparks of fire rising from a chimney at the back of that building. He instantly went to the front terrace, and gave an alarm, when the Porter and Governor were called up, and all three proceeded to the day-room, in which the men sit and work; and, on entering, found a blazing fire in the stove, before which were the two prisoners. On the fire were two tins, in which they were cooking some beef. They were immediately taken into cus-

tody, and, subsequently, it was ascertained that they had gone to bed with the other inmates, but had afterwards got up again and proceeded down stairs. They had then removed the bars of the larder window, from which they had abstracted about 2 lbs. of beef, some porter, and some butter, cheese, and bread, the remainder of which was found in a bag belonging to Glenning in the day-room, to get into which they must have first got into the dining-hall, and then through a window into the yard. Both prisoners were fully committed to Newgate for trial."—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, November 28, 1840.

"I shall take the statement of the Poor-Law Commissioners, as it appears in the 30th page of their report for 1840, in which they so pathetically plead to be continued in office. In attempting to prove those persons in error who have 'stigmatized the dietary as a slow process of starvation,' the Commissioners have given the following table as their dietary for an able-bodied man, and have annexed the price to each article.

ESTIMATED WEEKLY COST OF MAINTAINING AN ABLE-BODIED MAN AS IN TABLE NO. 1.

	Weight.	Price per pound.	Total.
	oz.	d.	s. d.
Bread	84 ..	2 .....	0 10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Meat	15 ..	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ .....	0 5 $\frac{1}{4}$
Cheese	8 ..	5 .....	0 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Potatoes	24 ..	0 $\frac{1}{4}$ .....	0 0 $\frac{3}{8}$
Suet-pudding	14 ..	2 .....	0 1 $\frac{1}{4}$

Total.	145		1 8 $\frac{3}{8}$
Broth, 9 pints; Gruel, 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints, $\frac{1}{4}$ d per pint .....		0	4 $\frac{7}{8}$

Such is the official document which is to refute those persons who 'stigmatize the dietary as a slow process of starvation!' Twenty ounces and a fraction of solid food per day for an able-bodied man, with a mess of gruel, charged at one farthing a-pint, and which may perhaps be worth a farthing a-pint as a substitute for glauber salts, but as an article of food is certainly not worth a farthing a-hogshead. However, let the gruel stand at their own valuation, which brings the cost of feeding an able-bodied man at 2s. and 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per week.

"In referring to this allowance in proof of their liberal treatment of the poor, these Commissioners say, 'Its weekly cost at such prices, we trust, relieves us from the necessity of entering into a vindication of its sufficiency, although it may possibly expose us to a charge of a contrary nature—that we have provided (I thought 'twas the rate payers had provi-

ded) more amply than the hard-working labourer with a family could accomplish for himself by his own exertions.'

"Now, it is of some importance that you members of 'Operative Conservative Associations' should read these statements over and over again, and that you should remember they are the statements of the Poor-Law Commissioners 'presented to both Houses of Parliament, by command of her Majesty.' These Commissioners, who receive £2,000 a-year from the people, tell you that 2s. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  per week will purchase a more ample diet 'than the hard-working labourer with a family could accomplish for himself by his own exertions.' If this be really the state of the question in the highest taxed country on the face of the earth, should you not seriously ask yourselves why you are Conservatives? Why you are associated to perpetuate a system which gives 2s. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d weekly for the diet of a 'hard-working labourer;' and £2,000 a-year, taken from the products of these hard-working labourers, for a pen-and-ink man who makes 'Dietary Tables'?

"The 4th Report of the Inspectors of Prisons, appointed under the provisions of an act of the late king, contains an elaborate account of the General Penitentiary at Milbank. The following is there given as the weekly allowance of food:—

DIET TABLE FOR ADULT MALE PRISONERS. Ounces.

Bread .....	184
Meat .....	20
Cheese .....	4
Potatoes .....	80
Onions .....	4
Broth .....	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints.
Gruel .....	11
Total ounces,	292

The articles of diet are nearly the same as those in the Poor-Law Commissioners' Table, with the exception of 14 oz. of Union-house pudding, which, being valued by the Commissioners at 2d per lb., the price of bread may be classed with that article. Here, then, you see that the convicted felon has 292 ounces of solid food weekly assigned to him, at the expense of the country whose laws he has outraged, while the poor hard-working labourer, who cannot obtain work, is cut down to 145 ounces, being somewhat less than half the quantity which is given to the felon."—*Mr. Bowen's (of Bridge-water) Letter to the Members of Operative Conservative Associations*, Nov. 24, 1840.

"Mr. Farr, a better judge of such matters than the Commissioners can pretend to be, and certainly a far more dis-



interested one than any medical hirelings who report the *minimum* of diet necessary to impair the functions of life, distinctly told them (the Commissioners), corroborated by the high authority of Dr. Dalton, that 'the privation of proper food, according to the extent to which it is carried (in the Union-houses) produces death, directly or indirectly, by *giving rise to diseases* of various kinds, and that the want of food, implying a want of everything else, such as firing, clothing, and every necessary of life, destroys a much higher proportion than is indicated by the registers.' To precisely the same effect was the testimony of Professor Hannay, at the late meeting of the *British Association*; and yet the Commissioners, carefully concealing the fact that the increase of disease among the poor is mainly attributable to starvation, are bold enough to assert, that the prevalence of disease among the lower orders, in close and crowded neighbourhoods, is to be attributed entirely to the want of cleanliness and to non-ventilation. On the authority of a Parliamentary Committee, appointed to inquire into an extraordinary mortality in the Penitentiary at Milbank, they explicitly learn that the rash experiment of reducing the prisoners' diet, though even their diminished allowance was more than double the Somerset-house standard, had been the sole cause of the fatal disease which had decimated the wretched inmates."—*Times*, Nov. 25, 1840.

"Much has been said about the scanty allowance to the inmates of the Union workhouses, but the following fact appears to tell a different tale. The Master of the Ludlow poor-house, in going his round on Wednesday, found, in the able-bodied women's ward one bag containing 5lbs. of pieces of bread, and three other bags with an average of from 2lbs. to 3lbs. each. It seems that they had found the allowance to be too liberal, and being unable to consume the whole, adopted the plan of concealing a portion rather than state the fact, lest the quantity should be diminished another time."—*Commissioners' Paid Paragraph in the "Hereford Journal,"* Dec. 2, 1840. (A pro-skillily print.)

"Skillily—a sort of hell-broth, with which those wretches in the Union houses of bondage, convicted of the abominable crime of poverty, are, 'according as the Act directs,' drugged. Since writing this, I have seen an account in the papers of the analysis of this villainous compound

as used in a certain 'Union,' and it is reported a considerable presence of *poisonous matter* was detected in its composition! Verily, the disciples of the Malthusian and the Broughamite academies are not unwise in their generation. The cheapest way to keep paupers is certainly under ground."—*Note to "Don Juan, Junior."*

"As one barrier to the increase of expenditure in the detailed management, the Commissioners should be empowered to fix a *maximum* of the consumption per head within the workhouse, leaving to the local officers the liberty of *reducing it below the maximum*, if they could safely do so."—*Commissioners' 1st Report*.

"Weekly allowance of food to an able-bodied man in a Union workhouse, 145 ounces."—*Commissioners' Report*, p. 30.

"Weekly allowance of food to a convicted felon in the Penitentiary, 292 ounces."—*Inspectors of Prisons' 4th Report*, p. 28.

"The convicted felon's weekly allowance at the Milbank Penitentiary, the most severe in the kingdom, is somewhat more than twice as much as that of an able-bodied pauper in a Union workhouse, against whom no crime but poverty has been alleged."—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Dec. 25, 1840.

In a report of a Committee of the House of Commons on the state of the Penitentiary, the following directions are appended to the dietary table:—

"Prisoners employed in work of extraordinary labour, or under circumstances which may render it necessary, may be allowed an addition to the quantity of their provisions, by the direction of the Committee." "*Memorandum*.—Female prisoners employed in the washhouse shall be allowed an addition of half-a-pound of bread, and an allowance of meat on washing-days, until the further orders of the Committee. By order of the Committee. "A. MACDONALD"

Now compare these directions with the following *ukase* issued by the Poor-Law Commissioners, and you will see, without the aid of a telescope, how much more the bellies of criminal prisoners are regarded than the bellies of the Union-workhouse poor:—

"SIR,—I am directed by the Poor-Law Commissioners for England and

Wales to request, that you will call the attention of the Board of Guardians to the practice of increasing the allowance of food to paupers employed in the domestic and household-work of Union-workhouses, with a view of its discontinuance, if it exists in the —— Union.—  
By Order of the Board,

“E. CHADWICK, Secretary.  
“To the Clerk of the —— Union.”

THE OUT-DOOR RELIEF DINNERS OF LORD MELBOURNE.—“Queen-square.—William Donovan, a labouring man, was charged with carrying a placard on the footway pavement in front of the House of Lords, by which he obstructed the free passage of the members, and rendered himself liable to a penalty under the 8th section of the 54th clause of the Police Act. Police constable Carter stated, that about half-past four o'clock on Friday evening, he was on duty in front of the House of Lords, when his attention was directed to the defendant, who was walking up and down with a board on which was the following placard:—‘Viscount Melbourne and the boy Jones. Extract from *Jones's Peep into the Palace*: Dinners: Viscount Melbourne, 867; E. Jones, 4; majority for Lord Melbourne, 863. Thus giving your lordship a clear working majority of 863 dinners over me.’”—*Sunday Paper*, May 22, 1841.

“EXPENSE OF CHRISTMAS DINNERS IN WORKHOUSES.

“The following correspondence has been addressed to the Assistant Poor-Law Commissioners in the country, and also to the Auditors of the different Unions; from which it will be seen, that the Guardians ought to feel very much obliged to the Commissioners for allowing them to do what they like with their own money—a discretion which we hope they will not fail to use on all occasions most fit for making the hearts of the poor to rejoice:—

“‘Poor-Law Commission Office,  
“‘Somerset-house, 18th  
“‘March, 1840.

“‘Sir,—The Poor-Law Commissioners have perceived, that, on Christmas-day, and other recent festive occasions, the

Guardians of various Unions have provided for the inmates of workhouses diners which, both in quantity and quality of food, and its cost, have greatly exceeded the usual diet of the workhouse inmates, and even many of the less prosperous portion of the rate-payers. The Commissioners admit that they are very unwilling to interfere with these proceedings, owing to their respect for the motives which have given rise to them.

“‘The Commissioners, however, cannot but perceive the injustice of applying the proceeds of a compulsory tax, raised only to relieve destitution, to provide for the inmates of a workhouse luxuries which are beyond the reach of those by whom the tax is paid. They have, therefore, determined to give positive instructions to the Auditors to disallow in the accounts any expenditure which shall henceforth have been incurred in the extra allowances which shall be furnished on the occasion above alluded to.

“‘The Commissioners have only to add, that when the *indulgences above mentioned are supplied to the inmates of the workhouse at the expense of private individuals*, the question assumes altogether a different form, and, if strictly confined to extraordinary occasions, *seems not to require the interference of the Commissioners.*

“‘Signed, by order of the Board,

“‘E. CHADWICK, Secretary.

“‘To Assistant Poor-Law

“‘Commissioner.’

“‘Poor-Law Commission Office,

“‘Somerset-house, 20th

“‘March, 1840.

“‘Sir,—The Poor-Law Commissioners forward, for your information and guidance, with reference to future cases of Christmas and other similar feasts in workhouses, the accompanying copy of a letter recently addressed by them on that subject to their Assistant-Commissioners.

“‘With respect to any past instances in which expenses of this nature have already been incurred, and shall not be objected to, the Commissioners have no wish to interfere.

“‘Signed, by order of the Board,

“‘E. CHADWICK, Secretary.

“‘To the Union Auditor.’”



## THE MEDICAL TREATMENT OF THE PAUPER POOR.

“ Making sure of murder’s work ! ” —WALTER SCOTT.

“ Mr. WAKLEY said—A pauper of the name of Parks had died of exhaustion ; a complaint was made that the poor man had not received proper attention ; that his case had been most grossly neglected. When the matter came before the magistrates, the mayor was examined with regard to the case, and he stated, that he had endeavoured to obtain some relaxation of the rule which had reference to the administration of nourishment in cases of exhaustion. The rule was, that when the surgeon ordered any article of food not in the diet table, it was not to be exhibited until the subject had been brought under the consideration of the Board of Guardians, and had received their sanction. So that, in point of fact, if the surgeon were called in to a case, and he found the person dying of starvation, either caused by disease, or for want of proper nourishment, he had not the power to order a glass of wine, or any additional food, until his prescription went officially before the Guardians and received their approbation. One of the magistrates on the bench, when the case of Parks was investigated, was Col. Rolleston, a member, he believed, of that House. He hoped the hon. member was present. He (Col. Rolleston) had said, on the occasion referred to, that the rule of the Board of Guardians had met with the disapprobation of the Poor-Law Commissioners. A surgeon had that day come before him, who had had some dispute with the Uxbridge Board of Guardians. It was his (the surgeon’s) practice when called in to a case of sickness occurring in a workhouse, to order first a proper supply of nourishment. This gentleman, Mr. Rayner, was told, that if he addressed himself to the Commissioners they would give such directions, and that an effectual remedy would in due time be applied. To that Mr. Rayner’s answer was, that he would place the whole of the correspondence into his (Mr. Wakley’s) hands, with full authority to lay it before the House. Before he proceeded to read the correspondence, he wished to put this question to hon. members, and he called upon such as could answer it to do so. He wanted

to know if the Bill then before them was a Bill for the benefit of the poor, or for the benefit of the rich ? The rich could protect themselves, but the poor had no representatives in that House, though they had some friends, and now, as one of those friends, he called upon the House to say if the rule laid down by the Board of Guardians of the Uxbridge Union was such a rule as the House, by its deliberate vote, was disposed to sanction. Were they prepared to maintain the inflexible operation of a law, the effect of which must be to consign the poor to utter destitution ? The medical officer of a Union might order for a patient Epsom salts, he might order jalap, he might order rhubarb, or any other drug—he might prescribe medicines to any extent ; but, as the House well knew, those drugs would not sustain human life. Still the Guardians put no restraint upon the administration of drugs ; but the medical officer must beware how he recommended anything more costly. There must be no stimulant ; no remedy of that description could at any time, or under any pretext whatever, be administered without the consent of the Guardians previously obtained. Now, he put it to the just feelings of hon. members to say if anything could be more horrible than this ? Could there be anything more deserving than this was of being called direct, cold-blooded, heartless cruelty ? It never happened to him to meet with any detail of circumstances which struck his mind as being more horrible and dreadful than the conduct of these Guardians. He should now, with the permission of the House, proceed to lay before them the correspondence to which he had, up to this time, been directing their attention. The first letter he should read was from Mr. Rayner to the Board of Guardians of the Uxbridge Union, and was in the following terms :—‘ Uxbridge, Dec. 3d, 1841.—Gentlemen,—It having been represented to me, that the Board of Guardians had observed that I had given many orders for mutton, bread, and beer, to the cases under my care, and which have appeared to them to be more than rea-

sonable, I have considered it right to acquaint the Board, that I have not, in a single instance, given one order more than what I considered, as a medical officer, it was my duty to do; and I beg leave respectfully to remark, that a proper quantity and description of nourishment (only to be known by the medical attendant) is of as much, if not more, importance to the successful issue of any case under treatment, as any other remedy.—I remain, &c., William Rayner.' The next document to which he wished to direct the attention of the House, was an extract from the order-book of the Uxbridge Union; it was in these words:—'It appeared from the medical weekly return-book of the Ruislip district, that the medical officer has attended nineteen patients during the past week, to fourteen of whom he has ordered indiscriminately mutton, beer, bread, &c. Besides these cases, he has given two orders to the Relieving Officer for paupers whose names do not appear in the medical returns, namely, Mrs. Edwards's child,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of mutton per day, Mrs. Fellows's, mutton as before. Resolved, that Mr. Rayner, the medical officer, be requested to furnish the Guardians with an explanation on the subject.' The reply to that resolution made by Mr. Rayner was this:—'Uxbridge, Feb. 4, 1841. To the Board of Guardians, Uxbridge Union. Gentlemen,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of a resolution of the Board of Guardians, handed to me this day by Mr. Woodbridge. I beg to refer you to my letter addressed to the Board on the 3d of December, 1840; and again to state, that the articles of diet which I have ordered, to which that resolution refers, I consider necessary for my patients, and so long as I remain a medical officer of the Union I shall continue to order them, if they require them. I have to-day learned, that some of my orders have been refused, and others torn up, while to the paupers threats have been held out by Mr. Stockwell, that if Mr. Rayner continued them he should withdraw the money allowed to the pauper by the Board of Guardians. I therefore consider it to be my duty to state distinctly to the Board, that I will not take upon myself the care and responsibility of those patients to whom diet is refused as a remedial means, nor risk the danger incurred by such refusal; but shall feel myself bound no longer to continue a medical officer of the Union under

such disadvantageous and hopeless circumstances. I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen, your obedient servant, William Rayner.' On the same day, Mr. Rayner wrote the following letter:—'Uxbridge, Feb. 4, 1841. To the Poor-Law Commissioners of England and Wales.—Gentlemen,—I am a medical officer for one of the districts of the Uxbridge Union, under a contract for one year, to terminate in March next. On the 3d of last December, in consequence of reports which reached me, I sent the letter marked No. 1 to the Guardians. To-day I received the resolution of the Board marked No. 2, and have since sent the letter marked No. 3, in reply. The district which I have is extensive and exceedingly poor, and I have ordered articles of diet which, in my judgment, I deemed necessary for the well-doing of my patients, and send you a copy of the return to the Board of Guardians on which the resolution was founded. Now, Gentlemen, I wish to be satisfied on the following points, and as it is my present intention to publish the whole correspondence for the benefit of others similarly circumstanced, I shall, therefore, thank you for an explicit and clear answer to my inquiries, as upon your answer will greatly depend my continuing a medical officer of the Union:—

1. Have I authority, as a medical officer, to order any description of article of diet for pauper patients under my care?
2. From whence does that authority arise?
3. Have the Board of Guardians or Relieving Officer authority to refuse an order for diet which I, as a medical officer, deem proper for my patients?

And, if so, 4. What would be the proper grounds for such refusal?—I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your obedient servant, William Rayner.' He wrote again on the 26th of February, in the following terms:—'Uxbridge, Feb. 26, 1841. Gentlemen,—I had the honour of addressing a letter to you, three weeks ago, on a subject in connexion with the Uxbridge Union, and have not yet been favoured with a reply. Similar circumstances having occurred since I wrote to you, I am anxious for your immediate answer to my inquiries, and have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your obedient servant, William Rayner.—To the Poor-Law Commissioners.' '1,636 A.—Poor-Law Commission-office, Somerset-house, March 4, 1841. Diet for Sick Paupers. —Sir,—The Poor-Law Commissioners



acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th ult., and of its enclosures, and they have had under their consideration the inquiries which you submit to them with respect to your authority as medical officer of the Uxbridge Union to order any description of articles of diet for pauper patients under your care. The Commissioners, in reply, desire to inform you, that a medical officer is not empowered by the orders of the Commissioners, or by his contract with the Guardians, to order articles of diet for pauper patients under his care. Such a power would be equivalent to the power of giving relief, which the law has vested generally in the Guardians, and which it is not competent to a medical officer to exercise. A medical officer can only recommend or advise the Guardians (or Relieving Officer) to give certain articles of diet to a pauper patient, and the Guardians (or their Relieving Officer) will exercise their discretion, upon their own responsibility, whether they will or not adopt such recommendation or advice.—By order of the Board, — Assistant-Secretary.' The House must now have seen, that the Board of Guardians, after employing a medical man themselves, assumed the power of interfering with his medical treatment of the patients intrusted to his care. What else did their conduct amount to? The doctor was called in, he found the patient with a sinking pulse, he found that nutriment, and not medicine, was the chief thing required; he found that beef and mutton, that jellies and soups, and wines, were the remedies which alone could restore the patient to a state of health. The necessity for this might arise on the night of a Tuesday; the Guardians might not meet until the following Tuesday, and what in the mean time was to become of the unfortunate pauper patient? The Poor-Law Commissioners took little pains to provide for his sustenance in such an event. In what light, he would ask, was it probable that the public would view a transaction of this nature? Would they not view it with horror and disgust? It was horrible and disgusting, and nothing else; it gave the Guardians the power of sentencing the paupers to death. (Hear, hear.) What a contrast this exhibited to the treatment which the inmates of prisons experienced! There the medical officer was not restrained, as he was in the case of the innocent and unoffending paupers; he might order whatever diet he pleased.

The prisoners were immediately supplied with wine or with other sustenance to whatever extent the medical officer might think necessary, and all this for the benefit of delinquents who had offended against every law; while the honest and industrious pauper, who had toiled and slaved through 30 or 40 years—who, throughout the whole of that period had, in common with the class to which he belonged, contributed to the resources, the dignity, the strength, and the wealth of the empire, yet was to be allowed to perish in his old age from mere want of sustenance! In the peculiar gaol which the Poor-Law Amendment-Act had created, the prisoners were allowed to starve. The medical officer must see them die under his care, and was not supplied with the means of administering to them the only remedy which his art enabled him to suggest. (Hear, hear.)

"Mr. DARBY said, that under the old law a remedy for the evil of which the hon. gentleman complained was to be found in an application to a magistrate; he believed that remedy still continued to exist. If a medical officer said, that the case of any pauper patient was one of a dangerous character, and that additional nutriment and stimulants were required for his use, then the magistrates possessed the power, and it was not to be supposed that in any case they would want the inclination, to make such an order as the exigency of the case might seem to require. There certainly was a clause in the existing law to that effect, and he could not help feeling surprised that it should have eluded the examination of the hon. gentleman opposite, the hon. member for Finsbury.

"Sir H. VERNEY was quite sure that, where an alteration of diet was necessary, means existed for enforcing a supply.

"Lord HOWICK quite agreed with the last speaker, that in any case of emergency a remedy did exist. The question which the hon. member for Finsbury had raised was this, whether or not the medical officer could order supplies of food independently of that discretionary power with which the Board of Guardians were supposed to be invested by the law, as it at present stood. That was, he apprehended, the question which had been raised. Now, in common justice, he felt bound to say, that he never remembered an instance in which any Board of Guardians hesitated to allow nutritive diet when required to do so by the medical

officer. It was well known, that in every part of the country they readily gave wine, and everything else that the condition of the patient seemed to require ; it was possible, that in many cases statements to a contrary effect were circulated, but he believed that they were put forward without the least foundation. It did not by any means follow, that because a medical man had received legal authority to practise, he was therefore free from the wish to excite dissatisfaction throughout the country. Although a member of the College of Surgeons, he might be anxious to acquire a low and despicable popularity ; he might wish to flatter the worst passions and prejudices of the multitude ; he might abuse the trust reposed in him ; he might avail himself of the power which he possessed and convert it to purposes of mischief ; it did not follow, from what the House heard that evening, that something of that sort might not be the case ; and if a Board of Guardians suspected that anything of the kind were practised under the plea of duty, they were bound not to allow the medical officer to take out of their hands the power of giving or withholding relief. He could not, without stronger evidence than had yet come under his observation, bring himself to believe, that the gentlemen, the magistrates, the farmers of England, would be guilty of such conduct as had been imputed to them by the hon. member for Finsbury ; he could not believe it on the unsupported statement of the hon. member. He heard enough to convince him, that the hon. member gave ready credence to every story related to him on subjects of this nature ; he never allowed himself for a moment to doubt any statement made to the disadvantage of the Poor-Law Commissioners. He did not accuse the hon. member of wilful misrepresentation—to do so would be unparliamentary. (A laugh.) He accused the hon. member of nothing of that sort ; but if he were in the habit of loosely adopting statements with which he might be furnished on occasions of this kind—[Mr. Wakley observed that none of his statements had been rebutted]—but they had not been substantiated. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member was a strenuous advocate for the maintenance of local governments, and for allowing parties to manage their own affairs ; yet now he objected to the exercise of any discretion on the part of the elected representatives of a parish or Union. But the whole of what occurred

at Uxbridge, and at the Nottingham Union, convinced him—if he could be said to want any further proof—of the justice and the wisdom of having an impartial central authority to control the proceedings of local Boards and officers. He did trust that the cases which had that evening been brought forward would not be implicitly received. Before he sat down, he could not help observing, that the hon. member who brought them forward had not taken the precaution of mentioning the matter to gentlemen connected with that part of the country, in order that it might be inquired into before the subject came under the consideration of the House. Nothing was known of the matter beyond the statements which the House had heard from the hon. member himself, and he did hope that the House would not attach any weight to complaints of that description.

“Colonel SIBTHORP said, it had been stated that Mr. Rayner might be one of those who were seeking popularity to serve their own ends, by bringing this measure into disrepute : but were there not others who were seeking popularity with the same view ? Were there not noble lords who, when they were turned out of one place, were trying by all means in their power to get into another ? (Laughter.) It appeared, that three weeks had elapsed before any answer was sent to the statement of this medical officer. Now, if that were the feeling which the noble lord justified, he would tell the noble lord he had no reason to boast of it, and that the sooner he quitted the situation of Poor-Law Guardian, the more satisfactory would it be to the poor of the Union over which he presided. (Hear.) He thought this was a most important case, and that it proved how little they could trust to the Poor-Law Commissioners in the regulations they made, and how little confidence they could have in the Boards of Guardians in carrying those rules into execution.

“Sir A. DALRYMPLE said, he had listened with pain to the speech which had been made by the noble lord opposite (Lord Howick) in answer to that of the hon. member for Finsbury. (Hear, hear.) The noble lord seemed to forget that at that moment the whole of England was not under the sway of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and that, therefore, it was necessary, patiently and calmly to listen to and investigate any of those statements that were made, and see whether they



were accurate or not, and not to answer those who brought them forward in the same way as the noble lord had answered the hon. member for Finsbury. What was the case and manner of proceeding in those places which were not in Union? He would mention a case within his own knowledge. During the last winter, he had received a letter from an individual resident in the town which he represented, stating, that his foot was frost-bitten, that he was in great distress, and begging he would allow him some relief. It appeared that he was a person who had been a pauper in the parish. He (Sir A. Dalrymple) went to the surgeon who attended the parish, and asked him the state of the case. That officer answered, that the applicant was a pauper who had received out-door relief, but that it was in his power, from the directions he had received, to administer to the paupers under his charge any species of food or nourishment which he thought fit (loud cries of 'Hear, hear,') and that it was therefore unnecessary for the man to have made that application. (Hear, hear.) Now the statement which had been made by the hon. member opposite, appeared to him to deserve consideration in this respect. (Hear.) Even supposing that the medical officer, as the noble lord had suggested, had made this statement for the purpose of creating popularity, still it was possible that the persons to whom he wished to administer that relief might really have required it, and it was therefore the duty of the Board of Guardians to have inquired into the circumstances. (Hear, hear.) It was possible they had done so, but he had referred to the Poor-Law Commissioners in London. An extract from their answer had been read, and it stated nothing of any inquiry having been made. There seemed to have been no distinct inquiry, and the medical officer had received a reproof for his conduct, which in his opinion was wrong. (Hear.) But what he wished was, that all acrimony should be avoided on both sides of the House when cases of this kind were brought forward. (Hear, hear.) He was sure that that acrimony had been one of the causes that had produced so much ill-feeling against the Poor-Law throughout the country. There was only one more observation which he wished to make. Many of these gentlemen, who acted as Assistant-Poor-Law Commissioners, had theories of their own that did not answer when carried into practice, and it was therefore highly

necessary that their proceedings should be carefully watched. (Hear, hear.)

"Colonel ROLLESTON said, he understood that, during his absence, his name had been mentioned in reference to a case with which he was in some degree acquainted; and he must express his regret that the hon. member for Finsbury had not given him some little intimation of his intention to refer to that case, as he was led to believe, from what he had ascertained from hon. members on one side or the other, that some misapprehension might exist as to the circumstances of it, and that blame might be attached to the wrong quarter. (Hear.) He would, however, endeavour to give some explanation of the circumstances of the case. As an *ex-officio* Guardian of the Union in which that case occurred, he was one of those who held the opinion, that unless Guardians regularly attended to the business of the Board, they did little or no good by only going now and then. Acting on that principle, he seldom visited the Board; nor should he have done so on this occasion, but for a most frightful statement that had appeared in the public papers, in reference to a pauper, who was represented to have died in the Union workhouse under the most distressing circumstances. When he heard of it, he considered it his duty to attend the Board to ascertain whether any steps had been taken in reference to it; and on doing so he found the question had been already argued, and that a resolution had been come to that the case should be investigated. From that investigation it appeared, that this unfortunate man was exceedingly ill, and that he had been removed to the Union workhouse, a distance of ten or eleven miles, in an open cart, in most inclement weather, when the temperature was ten or fifteen degrees below the freezing point. He was received into the workhouse at about five o'clock in the evening in a state of extreme debility, and was attended to, but he never rallied, and he died at eleven or twelve o'clock the following day. Everything was done, he believed, that could be done by the inferior servants; but the more particular part of the question rested with the medical officer. On examination, he said he had prescribed for this man some water-gruel and tea, and something warm, &c. He (Colonel Rolleston) asked him whether he had prescribed in writing or verbally, and his reply was, 'in writing,' and he accordingly produced his book.

In that book, he (Colonel Rolleston) saw entered, 'water-gruel and tea,' with an '&c.' He observed to the medical officer, that the '&c.' was very wide in its meaning, and asked him what he meant by it. His answer was, 'something warm of that sort; nothing but warm tea or water-gruel.' He (Colonel Rolleston) said, 'Do you mean to say, that under the circumstances of this case, which I understand to be one of extreme debility, something more calculated to sustain life, or more stimulating, was not necessary?' The answer of the medical officer, to his astonishment, was this—'Most assuredly; I should have given him warm wine, or spiced wine, or something of that sort, but I had no power of doing it, by the orders of the Board of Guardians.' (Hear, hear.) He said he thought that was totally impossible, and that there could be no such order (hear, hear,) for it was contrary to the spirit of the Act, and the rules and regulations of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and the common feelings of humanity. He told the medical officer he was quite satisfied he must be mistaken, but his answer was, that he was not mistaken; that there was such an order, and he would appeal to the Chairman of the Board, a gentleman of the highest respectability, to know whether such an order did not exist. The explanation that was accordingly given was this:—that what had been done had been according to their order: it was true there was no written order of the kind on the books; but the medical officer had received an injunction that he should not apply stimulants of this sort without a special order of the Board. (Hear, hear.) He regretted further to say, that that medical officer had applied four or five times to the Guardians to have that injunction set aside, but he had been unable to attain it. (Hear, hear.) He was sure, however, that the House would see that this did not reflect on the Commissioners. If the Board of Guardians had given that injunction, and that injunction had been acted on, the Commissioners were not to blame. It so happened, that one of the Poor-Law Commissioners (as we understood) was present at the time of the investigation; of course he took no part in the proceedings of the Board, but he (Colonel Rolleston) appealed to him whether such an order was not contrary to the spirit of the Act and the rules of the Commissioners. (Hear, hear.) He really believed it to be so, and he considered that this unfortunate occur-

rence, whether from a mistake on one side or the other, did not rest with the Poor-Law Commissioners, or any order they had made. But the case had been carried further. It was brought before the magistrates, and they thought the matter so serious as to require still further investigation. It was then brought before a court of law, and the learned judge, in his address to the grand jury, said, that the persons were indicted only for a misdemeanour in this case, but he would most distinctly tell them it ought, if anything, to have been an indictment for manslaughter, and it was, therefore, not found. The indictment was against the medical officer and the overseer, who had sent this poor unfortunate man to the workhouse in an open cart in such inclement weather. (Hear, hear.) Those were the circumstances of the case, and they were even now under investigation by the proper authorities, who would see where the blame ought to rest. (Hear, hear.)

"Captain HAMILTON thought the statement of the hon. member for Finsbury would induce hon. members to pause before they voted for the report at all; because it was stated in the report, that the Commissioners did not sanction this extra allowance to paupers. It was said, that the by-rule had been applied only to the Uxbridge Union; but, according to the 4th clause of this bill, he believed it would become a general law for all Unions.

"Mr. WOOD said, he thought the hon. member who had just spoken would find nothing in the 4th clause of this bill to justify the fear he had expressed. The question was, whether a medical officer of a Union had a right, without an order of the Board of Guardians, to order an indiscriminate supply of extra sustenance. He recollected that, according to the documents which the hon. member for Finsbury had read, the medical gentleman in question had ordered extra sustenance in two cases which did not appear in his medical report; and he must say, that, according to all the experience he had had as a Guardian of the poor, such a course was contrary to all the rules and regulations of any Board.

"Mr. C. BULLER said, that if a report were laid before a Board of Guardians, that a medical man had attended in the course of the last week only 19 cases, and that out of those in 14 cases he had ordered wine and extra sustenance of that kind, he must say, that if he were Chair-



man of that Board he should have felt himself bound to make some inquiry into the circumstances. But he did not think it possible, that out of such a small number of cases, so many could have required such a liberal order as to wine and other things of the same kind. It did not appear to him, however, that the Board of Guardians did restrict their medical officers from making those orders until they extended them too far.

“General JOHNSON said, it must not be forgotten that this case had been referred to the Commissioners, and three weeks elapsed without any notice being taken of it. Another letter was then sent, and after taking further time to consider their answer, they at last confirmed the order of the Board of Guardians by saying, that the medical officer was not to give extra sustenance except by the advice of the Board of Guardians, and either at the option of the Guardians or the Relieving Officer. Now, since Boards of Guardians met only once a fortnight, and although many cases might be brought in requiring extra sustenance, yet the medical man would only have the power to order water-gruel or tea. (Hear, hear.) Were hon. members sent to that House to devise means for starving the poor?”

“Mr. GROTE said, no blame could be attributed to the Commissioners or to the Board of Guardians; but the hon. member for Finsbury desired that all medical officers attached to Unions should have the unlimited liberty of ordering sustenance of the most expensive kind, without its being in the power of the Guardians or the Commissioners to disallow the orders of the medical officers, even if they felt it necessary to do so. (Hear, hear.) If this principle were admitted, the medical officers would become the real administrators of the relief to the poor, and the Poor-Law Commissioners and the Boards of Guardians might be dispensed with all at once. (Hear, hear.) In the case instanced by the hon. member for Finsbury the Commissioners were appealed to, and they were obliged to interpret the law as it existed. The principle which the hon. member wished to establish was a bad one, both under the new and under the old law.

“Colonel WOOD protested against the doctrine of the hon. member for the city of London. He regarded the medical officer as not only responsible for the medicine he prescribed to his patients, but also for the diet he ordered. (Cries of ‘Order!’)

“The SPEAKER decided, that as the hon. member had spoken before, he was out of order in addressing the House a second time.

“Mr. EASTHOPE concurred in the observation which had just fallen from the hon. member for Brecon. The medical officers ought to be allowed a proper discretion; and if they executed their duty inefficiently, the Board of Guardians had it always in their power to dismiss them. He objected to the interference of the Guardians with the medical officers in the cases of individuals. Common sense and common humanity seemed to suggest the contrary mode of proceeding. (Hear.)

Mr. W. ATTWOOD said, that the case before the House was that of poor persons who had been convicted of no crimes, but whose sufferings proceeded from their poverty. They required medical assistance, and the medical officer did not feel at liberty, in consequence of the positive orders he had received, to administer the relief which their suffering and sinking nature required, without first receiving the sanction of the Board of Guardians, even though death might be the consequence of delay. If this was the case of any individual who was suffering, not from poverty, but from some cause that occasioned an excitement in the country, he was sure that such treatment would be alluded to in that House in the strongest terms of reprobation. (Hear, hear.) It had been said, that no blame was due either to the Guardians or to the Commissioners. The hon. member for London had gone so far as to say, that no blame was attributable to any one, and that that which had occurred was only what might be expected to occur under similar circumstances. Now, the House would bear in mind some observations which had been made by the right hon. member for Tamworth, showing the incautious manner in which the Poor-Law Commissioners were accustomed to express their wishes and instructions, and which was felt to be improper even by the supporters of the Poor-Law. He would put it to the House, then, whether some of these incautious expressions might not, in the case brought under the notice of the House, have led the Board of Guardians into error. It was the opinion of some hon. members, that the medical officer should not administer relief without the consent of the Guardians; but it might happen, that unless the medical officer had such power he would

not be able to save the life of a pauper suffering from sickness. (Hear.) He saw no security for the pauper if the medical officer were taught to look upon the Board of Guardians in the character of a consulting physician. (Hear, hear.) Unless a medical officer could be intrusted with the discretion of ordering proper sustenance for the poor, he was not fit to be intrusted with their care. (Hear, hear.) It was competent for the Board of Guardians, at their weekly meetings, to check any abuse. When he saw the hon. member for London defending rules which must necessarily lead to the recurrence of cases similar to the one just alluded to—(Cries of 'No.') Why, the hon. member had said, that if the medical officer were vested with the unlimited discretion of administering food and sustenance to the poor, in that case the medical officer, and not the Board of Guardians, would be the actual administrator of relief to the poor. Now he (Mr. W. Attwood) said, that if the medical officer were to be allowed to administer no relief to the sick paupers without the consent of the Guardians, cases similar to the one brought under the consideration of the House must constantly occur. (Hear, hear.) When he saw attempts made to extenuate proceedings of such a nature, he could not but believe that some expressions—unguarded they might be—contained in the reports of the Poor-Law Commissioners, had led to the formation of these stringent rules by the Boards of Guardians. It was for this reason that those who opposed the New Poor-Law thought it would not be wise to continue it until security was obtained for greater caution in its execution. (Hear.)

"Mr. WARD said, that the hon. member who had just sat down had totally misstated the argument of the hon. member for London, who had not said that no discretion should be intrusted to the medical officers, but had merely stated that unlimited power could not be delegated without responsibility to them, unless indeed they were made the sole administrators of the Poor-Law Relief Bill. (Hear, hear.) The hon. gentleman, therefore, had entirely misstated this argument, and had done so almost wilfully. (Cries of 'No.') He begged pardon for having made use of an improper phrase. He should have thought that the last charge which would have been brought against the Poor-Law was this charge, that it prevented the medical officers from pre-

scribing discretionary relief. In every part of the country the medical officers were empowered to order discretionary relief for the whole week intervening between one sitting of the Guardians until the succeeding sitting. This was the case in Hertford, and the Union with which he was connected. He knew a medical gentleman who prescribed the use of wine, meat, and bread to any extent he pleased, giving in his account to the Board of Guardians at the end of the week, and in no single instance had the exercise of this power ever been found fault with. In the part of the country with which he was acquainted, a low typhus fever prevailed in one district, and a number of poor persons were attacked by it. By order of the Board of Guardians, the medical officers attended on these poor people for six whole weeks; and the charge for wine, and other comforts and necessaries, amounted to £3, £4, or £5 for each family. He thought it necessary to make these observations, in order that both sides of the question should be heard.

Mr. W. ATTWOOD said, that as the hon. member had withdrawn the charge he had made of wilful misrepresentation, he (Mr. Attwood) would leave the House to decide which of the two had been most guilty of misrepresentation.

"Mr. WARD said, that the manner in which the argument of the hon. member for London had been misrepresented almost justified him in using the expression which had fallen from him. ('Order,' and cries of 'Spoke!')

"Mr. COURTENAY thought, that the old system of poor-laws was like a cancer spreading on the vitals of the country, and he entertained respect for the courage of the ministers who dared to probe the wound. He would no more think of charging them with cruelty than he would the surgeon who used the knife to cut out a cancer. Nevertheless, he could not shut his eyes to the occurrences which were taking place in the country. The House had heard of an individual case; but he could quote the case of many individuals in the Union of Bridgewater, and he was sure the House could not listen to his account without shuddering at the pain and misery which the poor people had endured. At the end of October, 1836, the workhouse at Bridgewater was crowded to excess. An epidemic of a grave character broke out; dysentery prevailed, and a vast number



of persons were ill. The medical officer represented to the Board of Guardians that the disease was of an infectious nature; and he recommended that some change should be made in the diet. The House had heard of wine and meat and all kinds of comforts being prescribed, but in this case, all that the surgeon asked was, that the poor might be allowed to change their water-gruel, which, as hon. members might be aware, had a tendency to aggravate certain disorders of the bowels, for rice milk. The answer the surgeon received from the Board of Guardians was, that they could not interfere. The surgeon was given to understand, that his duty was with the sick only. No redress was to be had. These statements could hardly be believed, unless they had been proved on oath before the House of Lords. An appeal was made to the Commissioners, but from the end of October until the month of April following no answer could be obtained; and no power was given to change the diet, though the people were dying; and, in a small population, not less than 50 deaths occurred. He was not about to reason upon the principle *post hoc ergo propter hoc*; he admitted that these people may have died from some other cause; but when they saw persons enduring all the miseries of an hospital (for it was nothing else), medical men were bound to apply their understanding, their medical understanding, to the treatment of these poor people, in order to prevent the spread of an infection which had continued for five months, and nearly 50 persons had died. These were very serious considerations; and although he was no enemy to the Poor-Law, and did not wish to inflame men's minds, he could not but think that the House should have before it what had taken place under this law; and he trusted that the noble lord, in the present bill, would take care that, where an epidemic unfortunately happened to break out, there should be a change of diet, not only of those who were actually suffering, but of such as lived in the atmosphere of the disease.

“Mr. MUNTZ said, that the great objection to this bill was the power given to the Commissioners. If Guardians could not do as they liked, why should they be responsible? He did not say that the Commissioners would do what they thought wrong; but if, from the circumstances in which they were placed, they did that which produced the death of an indivi-

dual, they were guilty of murder. If they gave an order in consequence of which a poor man died, they were guilty of murder. No person of independent mind would be a Guardian in the present state of things (hear, hear); no man of feeling would act under orders which no man of feeling could put in execution (hear, hear); and, therefore, no man of feeling would be a Guardian. If a surgeon refused to act without the order of the Commissioners, he ought to be dismissed. To tell him (Mr. Muntz) that a surgeon ought to wait for the order of the Commissioners before he acted—why, it was a cold-blooded, deliberate murder. Men did not starve now, as in Queen Elizabeth's time, through idleness and dissipation, but because they could not get the means of employment; thousands were every week thrown out of employment by the condition of the country. The object should be to induce men of independent minds and good feelings to become Guardians, who would do justice to the people.

“Mr. WAKLEY replied, no sooner did one hon. member get up to make a statement of a particular case of cruelty, than up started another hon. member to state that no such thing had ever happened in the Union of which he was a Guardian—in his Union all parties were quite delighted with the system. The hon. gentleman, the member for Sheffield, had given an account of what passed in his Union; and from his statement, and that of other hon. gentlemen, it might be presumed by the House and country that a uniform system prevailed. He held in his hand a list of ‘amended workhouse rules,’ dated August, 1840, in which he found special reference to the matters under discussion at the present moment. He would read the part relating to the power of medical officers with respect to making arrangements for the sick. One hon. member had stated, that the medical officer had power to order anything he pleased for a pauper for a week. What said the rules? Were the Commissioners to be tried by their own rules, or by the statements of Guardians? In the 17th rule he found ‘the paupers of the respective sexes shall be dieted with the food and in the manner described in the dietary table hereunto annexed, marked B, and in no other manner.’ Then came a proviso—‘Provided, however, that the medical officer may direct in writing such diet for any individual pauper as he shall deem

necessary; and the master shall report such direction to the Board of Guardians, who shall sanction, alter, or disallow the same at their discretion.' (Hear, hear.) Very well—hear, hear. Now observe, a medical practitioner had a patient under his care, afflicted with some exhausting fever or abscess, day by day draining his strength, and threatening his life; the most imminent danger would be incurred by delay. Under these circumstances the surgeon orders port wine—as would be done in the case of criminals—mutton and rich broths, jelly; could the master of the workhouse keep these things? No such thing, he could not. Here was the evidence of the Master of the Basford Union;—'Mr. Johnson, Governor of the Basford workhouse, was then called by the magistrates, and deposed, that the Board of Guardians had made an order that no wine, ale, beer, or stimulants should be given without the sanction of the Board.' This was on their own book, it was not denied; 'and that the auditor' acting, be it observed, under the immediate authority of the Commissioners, 'had told him, that if any wine, spirit, or liquor, were given without the previous sanction of the Board, the charge would not be allowed in his accounts.' Was not that an answer? ('No, no.') What he complained of was, that the law was whatever the Commissioners pleased to make it; for the Guardians were entirely under their authority. If they were not satisfied with that, let them look at the interference of the Commissioners with regard to diet proved by the 17th rule of the work to which he had already directed their attention. In this rule he found the following:—'Provided also, that if the medical officer shall at any time certify that he deems a temporary change in the diet essential to the health of the paupers, the Guardians shall cause a copy of such certificate to be entered on the minutes of their proceedings, and shall be empowered forthwith to order, by a resolution, the said diet to be temporarily changed, according to the recommendation of their medical officer; and shall forthwith transmit a copy of such certificate and resolution to the Poor-Law Commissioners for their approval.' That was the second provision; but he would entreat the attention of the House to the provision in the first, to which no answer had been given—namely, that the recommendation of the medical officer could not be carried into effect until it had been laid before the Board of Guardians.

('No, no.') He spoke only of what was laid down in their own printed rules. He would read them the evidence of a surgeon with reference to a man who had died from exhaustion—in short, from starvation. He stated, 'I should have given him spiced port wine but that I had no power to do so, because there was an order of the Board which precluded me.' The effect of that order was, that if a man were taken ill on a Tuesday, the surgeon had no power to administer these necessities until the Board authorized him on the following Tuesday. He was prepared to contend, that this was in strict conformity with the resolutions of the Commissioners which he had quoted. ('No, no,' from Mr. G. Knight.) The hon. gentleman shook his head, but he held in his hand the printed rule. What followed? Referring to the minute-book he found that wine was prohibited without special order."—*Debate in the House of Commons*, March 22, 1841.

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[From the *Times*, November 22, 1837.]

"FACTS CONNECTED WITH THE MEDICAL RELIEF OF THE POOR IN THE BRIDGE-WATER UNION."

Under the above title a pamphlet has just appeared, published by a 'Medical Association,' containing facts and statements of a nature to stagger belief, were they not published on authority. Some of the reasons for publishing these statements are given in the following introductory remarks:—

"The intimate connexion which exists between the helpless poor of a district, and the medical men who are appointed to attend them during the diseases and accidents to which they are so liable, renders every attempt at unduly depressing the condition of such medical men, an indirect attack on the very existence of the suffering poor, whose lives frequently depend on professional assistance being promptly and cheerfully rendered, as well as on that assistance being continued with a perseverance which nothing short of professional zeal can supply. The medical man cannot be expected thus to act promptly, and cheerfully, and perseveringly, if he be depressed and degraded to the condition of a menial, and the consequences of such a degradation, although reaching him in the first instance, must fall with a more destructive effect on the poor. Under this conviction the medical practitioners of the town and neighbour-



hood of Bridgewater have determined to submit to the public the following plain statement, not as a matter in which the profession is especially interested, but as a subject of general interest to the community."

These are intelligible public grounds, but as to the private matter at issue between the Board of Guardians and the medical practitioners, the adequacy or inadequacy of the remuneration offered by the Board,—that we decline entering upon, further than is absolutely necessary to an understanding of the general bearings of the case. The medical men assert, that 'their salaries were inadequate as a remuneration, even on the most moderate scale, for the important duties which they had to perform:' and they thus put in contrast the salaries offered to the medical men with those received by the Assistant-Commissioners.

"The Union-house is calculated to contain 300 persons: the salary offered to the medical officer was £30 a-year, or 1s. 7½d. a-day. In the miscellaneous estimates presented to the House of Commons May 30, 1836, are the following items:—21 Assistant-Commissioners, £700 a-year each, £14,700. Their travelling and incidental expenses, including clerks, £800 a-year each, £16,800. Each Assistant-Commissioner, therefore, is charged to the country, £1,500 a-year, or £4 2s. 2d. a-day; whilst 19½d. a-day is considered a proper remuneration for an expensively educated medical man, intrusted with the lives of hundreds of his suffering fellow-creatures."

This is a kind of information which cannot be too frequently brought before the public. When the 'No Patronage' Government can fall upon a scheme for quartering a shoal of hungry dependents on the people of England, then thousands upon thousands of the public money are wickedly lavished; but when the necessities of the helpless are to be provided for, then rampant Whiggery is metamorphosed into the very genius of famine, and gluts itself, vampire-like, on the vitals of its victims. But to proceed with the pamphlet before us:—The scale of remuneration offered by the Board to the medical men was considered by them

so inadequate, that at the conclusion of the year they declined serving again on the terms proposed, at the same time stating, that,

"To prevent the poor from suffering by the delay consequent on the course taken by the Board of Guardians, the medical officers are ready to continue their professional attendance on the poor gratuitously until some other arrangement can be made, provided such arrangement be effected within a reasonable period."

This liberal offer was not accepted, but they were desired to attend the poor on the footing of "private patients." When the bills for such attendance were sent in, payment was delayed, under various frivolous pretences, and they say that,

"On Friday, October 27, a motion was made and seconded at the Board, that the medical officers should be offered double the amount of three weeks' present salaries in lieu of their bills; or, in other words, it was proposed to pay them £38 13s., instead of £248, the amount of their bills according to the agreement entered into with the Board on the 16th of June, making a difference of £209 7s. This was carried by a majority of one—16 voting for, and 15 against it.

"In refusing to accede to such an unheard-of proposition, the medical men are not influenced by the mere amount unjustly withheld from them. They protest against the principle of employing professional men on terms clearly defined, and then, when the services have been performed, turning round and offering them payment on some other terms which were never alluded to at the period of the agreement."

We must again say, that we have nothing to do with the foregoing statement further than is necessary to the understanding of the following appalling facts. It is said, that during the time that the poor were to be thus attended, and each case separately charged,

"The Relieving Officers were directed to be sparing in their orders for medical relief, and many cases occurred in which orders were repeatedly refused, and during this period many of the poor suffered severely. Many instances occurred in the Stowey district, amongst which the following is (it is to be hoped) unexam-

pled in cruelty and neglect:—Charlotte Allen, aged 31, who had been suffering for many years from a disease of the liver, with occasional severe attacks of fever, for which she had often been attended by the parish surgeon, was reported by the medical officer to be in a critical state, and in daily expectation of her delivery. The surgeon informed the Relieving Officer, that under such circumstances he thought his attendance would be necessary in her approaching labour. The Relieving Officer also considered it necessary, but declined giving an order without the direction of the Board, but subsequently told the surgeon, that his attendance would not be allowed. On the evening of Friday, the 30th of June, she was delivered by a woman, after a difficult and violent labour. For several days afterwards she was extremely ill, and becoming daily worse, a neighbour applied to the Relieving Officer on the following Monday for assistance, and was told by him, that, as there was no parish doctor at that time, no order must be given unless in cases of absolute necessity, as it was very expensive. He ordered her to apply to his wife, that she might visit her and judge whether it was necessary or not. His wife did not go, but sent to the midwife, who directed the poor sufferer to take three pennyworth of castor oil! She got worse and worse until Wednesday night, when her danger became so imminent, that an order was at last granted for the surgeon. He instantly obeyed it, and found the case so formidable, that he requested the advice and assistance of a friend. The poor woman had been attacked with a puerperal fever, the most dangerous and fatal disease to which lying-in women are liable; in addition to which she had, from the violence of her labour, and the unskilfulness of the midwife, suffered a dreadful laceration and a prolapsus of the womb, which is not only irremediable, but must render the remainder of her existence miserable to herself and intolerably offensive to those around her. In this dreadful condition was this poor woman kept from Friday, the 30th of June, to the following Wednesday night! She has been confined to her bed nearly ever since, and is at this time, four months from her delivery, totally unfit for anything: she can stand upright only a few minutes at a time. And all this suffering has been borne by a helpless woman to effect a saving of 10s.!

"This is by no means a solitary case of the suffering and irremediable injury inflicted on the poor. The following copy of a letter, sent to the surgeon of the Huntspill district, will illustrate the system adopted by the Board of Guardians:—

" 'Woollavington, July 1.

" 'SIR,—I am directed by the Board of Guardians to inform you, that you are to discontinue your attendance on the undermentioned paupers in Woollavington, until you receive further orders from the proper authorities—viz., George Reynolds's child, Nanny Millard, Kezia Coles, and Thomas Lovibond.

" 'I am, Sir, yours obediently,

" 'J. STAGG, Relieving Officer.

" 'To Mr. Caswell, Surgeon.'

"Here we see written directions given to the surgeon to discontinue his attendance; and what follows? Why, the death of one of the poor sufferers, who died a few days after this mandate was issued!

"It would be tedious and distressing to multiply cases; perhaps the following will be sufficient with the preceding to elucidate the fatal effects of the system adopted by the Board of Guardians. This case was that of a child, who was attacked with croup in the night, and for whom the anxious mother sought an order early in the morning, when she was refused by the Relieving Officer, according to the instructions which he had received. The heart-rending particulars of this dreadful case will be best understood by the following letter from one of the surgeons of this place:—

" 'July 14, 1837.

" 'GENTLEMEN,—I consider I am only doing my duty in laying this case before you.

" 'I was requested as a charity this morning to visit John Cook, Mount-terrace, Pig-cross, Bridgewater. I found him suffering from acute inflammation in the windpipe, and literally dying for want of surgical assistance, his mother having applied to your Relieving Officer, Mr. Newman, who refused to give an order, on the grounds of no medical man being appointed. She showed me the duplicates of part of his bed-clothes, which she had pawned for 1s. 6d., and which she offered me in payment of the medicines which I gratuitously supplied her with. This disease is a most dangerous one, and requires very prompt and efficient treatment, and already much time has been improperly lost.

" 'I beg to remain

" 'Your obedient servant,

" 'J. C. PARKER.

" 'To the Board of Guardians of the

" 'Bridgewater Union.'

"Between twelve and one o'clock on the same day, an order was received by Mr. King to attend the child until he was directed to the contrary; he instantly attended; but, as had been foretold by



Mr. Parker, so much time had been lost without any attempt to relieve a disease which, of all others, requires the most prompt and efficient treatment, that the poor child died the same evening.

"The above are some of the consequences of the line of conduct pursued by the Board of Guardians towards the medical men; but even these, and other distressing examples, failed to produce any ameliorating effect. When the day came for making the medical appointments, the Board, which had first divided the Union into seven districts, and then, finding these districts too large, had further divided it into nine, now determined, in the face of their former resolution, to reduce the number of districts to six; thus inevitably inflicting a still further degree of suffering on the helpless poor."

After making some further detailed statements, the medical men proceed to say—

"Whatever their feelings may be on the points above detailed, and however injuriously it may affect their interests to be obliged to institute expensive proceedings for the recovery of rights dishonestly withheld from them, they feel that this is a comparatively trivial part of the case submitted to the public. It is to the inevitable operation of all this persecution on the poor, during the pangs of acute disease, and in the excruciating hour of labour, that the attention of the public is especially invited. It is to such heart-rending cases as Charlotte Allen's and Reynolds's and Cook's, where the very bed-clothes of the dying are stripped off and pawned to obtain relief, where immediate death or a life of torture are the consequences of the system acted on by the Board of Guardians—it is to these and other equally horrible circumstances, that the public attention is called.

"In denouncing such acts, as the necessary consequence of the system pursued by the Board in its collective capacity, the medical men are most anxious to except many excellent and humane Guardians, who have nobly supported the cause of justice and humanity, and most ably advocated the claims of the poor. In such honourable hands the medical men would be most happy to leave their own case, but as the interests, and even the lives, of the poor, are, to a certain extent, involved in this question, they cannot consent to commit those interests entirely to the sentence of a secret tribunal,

where the honest and humane may find themselves in a minority. Under such circumstances, they do not feel that they should be performing their duty towards their poor neighbours, or to the profession of which they are members, unless they submitted to the salutary influence of public opinion some of the 'facts connected with the administration of medical relief in the Bridgewater Union.'"—*Times*, Nov. 22, 1837.

"We know nothing more disgraceful than to attempt to fetter the discretion of a medical man in prescribing what is needful for his patient, even though it may involve a trifling expense. To refuse it on such grounds, is to be accessory to the death of a fellow-creature, and to incur the guilt of homicide, if not of murder. Away with such weighing of pounds, shillings, and pence, against human life—away with such murderous economy—better that all the inmates of workhouses in England were stuffed to repletion, and gluttonized on their medicines, than that one of them should perish by starvation." *Conservative Journal*, March 27, 1841.

"On Tuesday evening, the members of the Board of Guardians of St. George the Martyr, Southwark, assembled an hour earlier than usual for the purpose of pursuing the inquiry into the alleged charge of neglect as regarded the non-attendance of Mr. Evans, one of the surgeons of the parish, to a case of scarlet fever, of which the child of a Mrs. Grubb was afflicted, and of which it died. The case has created a very considerable degree of excitement in the parish, and which was still further increased by Mr. Payne, the coroner, causing an inquest, and also from the fact, that some of the Guardians, who of late had not been in the habit of attending, were present on this occasion, as well as Mr. Evans. A long and angry discussion ensued among the members of the Board, one party charging the other with being actuated by political motives in bringing forward the case. Eventually, the friends of Mr. Evans decided upon bringing matters to a close, and Mr. Roberts moved the following resolution:—"It is the opinion of this Board, that Mr. Evans, one of the surgeons of this parish, is entirely exonerated from all blame as regards his treatment of the deceased child of Sarah Grubb." Mr. Perry, of the Westminster-road, seconded it. Mr. Day then moved, as an amendment—"Resolved, that after

hearing the evidence as to the case of the child Grubb, the Board are of opinion that two attendances from Thursday morning at ten o'clock, till half-past twelve on Monday, when the child died, were not sufficient, and the Board requests that Mr. Evans in future do attend more frequently to dangerous cases.' Mr. Hughes seconded the amendment. The parties then divided, when the amendment was carried by a majority of 10 to 3. Mr. Evans was then called in, and informed of the result."—*Champion*, Dec. 29, 1839.

"Mr. Blackstone wished to put a case which he believed would show, that the Guardians could administer the law better without than with the Commissioners. A short time ago, while a low fever raged in his Union, the Board of Guardians wished to send some old women out of the workhouse to wait as nurses upon the sick. It was found, however, that the Board of Guardians could not do so without the sanction of the Commissioners, and that sanction was refused. (Hear, hear.)"—*House of Commons*, March 26, 1841.

"He put it to the legal authorities in that House whether medical practitioners were empowered, under the existing rules, to administer such food and wine to the sick poor as they might deem necessary? The answer of the Commissioners to Mr. Rayner was, that he had not authority to do so. So that, however ill the patient might be, or however much in need of nourishing food or stimulants, the surgeon could not at once order or give, or cause to be given, such food to the patient without the sanction of the Board of Guardians. He had that day received a communication from Mr. Phillpotts, the surgeon of the Paddington parish, who said, that he really pitied the poor old inmates of the almshouse; that before the new law they received 5s. and 6s. a week; but that it was now greatly reduced. One poor old person who had been questioned on the subject, replied, '1s. 6d. a-week, a pound of beef, and a loaf of bread.' Mr. Phillpotts had informed him, that if he ordered wine and an additional quantity of food it would be given; but that in a short time it would be discontinued, and the patient told that he or she could not receive it any longer without going to the workhouse. He (Mr. Wakley) had gone himself to the almshouse, and asked some of the old people whether they would prefer remaining where they were, or going to the workhouse and receiving this

additional quantity of food, and the answer was, that they should not like to go to the workhouse. Such was their horror of the workhouse, that they preferred remaining and perishing where they were to encountering its cruelties; and yet this was the system which it was alleged had so much benefited the position of the aged and infirm. On Monday next he would make a statement respecting the rules for governing medical relief, which would show, that those rules were as repugnant to the principles of common justice as they were obnoxious to the dictates of common sense; and if, therefore, any persons should be ill-natured and vulgar-minded enough to doubt his statement on the subject, he hoped they would take the trouble of inquiring into it."—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons*, March 26, 1841.

"There is one material part which demands immediate and serious attention, I mean the medical and surgical care of the sick, and on this point a very extensive practice of 40 years renders me competent to give an opinion. During the early part of that period my intercourse with the poor was great and constant, often passing whole days and nights in their cottages, and for the last 28 years I have been the senior medical officer in the Bridgewater Infirmary. These opportunities have made me familiar with the habits and feelings of that class, and justice requires me to state, that I have frequently witnessed such instances of kindness, charity, and affection, towards each other as do honour to the best feelings of our nature.

"Before the introduction of the New Law, the overseers of parishes contracted with a medical practitioner of known reputation for the care of the poor, and, with very few exceptions, the duty was properly and satisfactorily performed at a very moderate expense, the surveillance of the rate-payers being sufficient to insure its proper discharge, whilst the mutual good understanding which existed between the medical men and the parochial authorities enabled the poor to receive prompt assistance without the trouble or delay of an order for attendance. But the New Law has broken up all old connexions, delivered the poor over in many instances to a set of needy, unprincipled, and unqualified practitioners, and has not only rendered medical assistance difficult of obtainment, but often delayed it until useless. This must be obvious to every



one who has contemplated the size and extent of many of the medical districts. For example, in the Bridgewater Union a person was appointed to a district containing ten parishes, and when the Guardians could not compel one of their former officers to undertake another district in an opposite direction, containing four large and scattered parishes, on their own terms, they appointed the same person, (a man who was not legally entitled to dispense medicine,) to these four parishes in addition, making the distance from one extreme to the other nearly eighteen miles, and thus putting it wholly out of the power of the poor to obtain relief in the time of need. I contend, therefore, that under the present system, the poor are infinitely worse provided with medical assistance than under the old—not only from the size of the districts, but from their being committed to the care of incompetent persons, some of whom have obtained employment by fictitious certificates, as in the case of the Bridgewater district. The fatal consequences of that flagrant appointment have already been before the public, and ought to be a warning to authorities never to consign those committed to their charge to reckless and unprincipled adventurers.

“When under examination before the select committee of the House of Lords, I stated my conviction, that the poor were worse provided with medical assistance under the New Law than under the Old, and was sharply cross-examined by Lord Radnor on this point, who affirmed, that the registration of medical visits insured better and more regular attendance on the sick: in answer to which I replied, that, from my own knowledge, such entries could not be depended on, and that they were often made at random by the pupil or dispenser. In proof of which, I adduced an instance in which three entries of visits had been made to a man in one week, who was proved by the Death Book to have been dead a fortnight before.

“In the *Times* of January 26th I published the two following cases of cruelty, both of which terminated in the death of the sufferers—an appalling fact, which cannot be too forcibly impressed on all those who are sincerely desirous of amending the harsh provisions of this law:—

““That women often die during labour from want of proper assistance, is certain, and my own observation convinces me, that such deaths

have been more frequent since the poor have, under the operation of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, either been refused their accustomed aid, or consigned to the care of adventurers, and incompetent and unqualified practitioners. I could fill the columns of the *Times* if I detailed the many fatal cases which have come within my knowledge, but I cannot forbear mentioning the following two:—One was that of a poor, but most industrious and respectable woman, whose former labours had been such as to require the assistance of one, and sometimes two, surgeons, who was refused by the Board of Guardians, to whom her husband applied, the assistance of the parish surgeon, and died in consequence, leaving five children. This poor woman had, on a former occasion, been attended by the parish surgeon, assisted by another surgeon, in consequence of the difficulty and danger to be apprehended; the child died, and the mother was only saved by great exertion. On the approach of her next confinement, her husband, a labourer of excellent character, working for 8s. a-week, lost a day's work to come in himself to the Board of Guardians of the Bridgewater Union, and petition for the assistance of the Union surgeon. His own account is as follows:—‘I went to the Board of Bridgewater on a Friday; the Chairman was there, and asked me what I wanted. I said a note for my wife to have the doctor when she was put to bed, for that she had a very bad time before, and had two doctors with her. He told me to go out and wait, and the gentlemen would consult. I was kept there waiting an hour and a-half, when the relieving officer came out and told me, that no note was granted. When I got home and told my wife that the doctor was not to be allowed, she was very much cast down.’ The poor woman was taken in labour that day fortnight, without any assistance but an ignorant midwife, until it was too late, and she died from the consequence of excessive hæmorrhage. The other was a case in which the necessary aid was so long delayed that she also died, leaving eleven children. I saw both these cases myself; and, after an extensive experience of 40 years, am warranted in saying, that both these women would have been saved if timely assistance had been afforded.’

“Not one of the amendments of which notice has been given in the Commons, would go to the prevention of such dreadful occurrences as the foregoing, where human life was recklessly sacrificed to save a few shillings, at a period, too, of peril and suffering, when the most urgent calls are made on our natural sympathy, and Christian feeling!”—*Mr. Jonathan Toogood's (of Bridgewater), Letter in the "Times," dated March 2, 1841.* [A more humane and patriotic opponent does not live than Mr. T. In the name of the poor I thank him for past endeavours in their behalf, and hope to meet him, again and again, in the field fighting for *so good* a cause.—G. R. W. B.]

## THE DECREASE OF WAGES, AND THE DESTITUTE CONDITION OF WORKING MEN UNDER THE NEW POOR-LAW.

"'Tis to work, and have such pay  
As just keeps life from day to day."—SHELLEY'S MASQUE OF ANARCHY.

"See yonder poor, o'er-labour'd wight,  
So abject, mean, and vile,  
Who begs a brother of the earth  
To give him leave to toil :  
And see his lordly fellow-worm  
The poor petition spurn,  
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife  
And helpless offspring mourn !"—BURNS.

"The wages of the day-labourer, *whose lot was to be bettered by the bill*, have been *reduced*, and he is fast descending into a state of indescribable misery and distress."—*Blakey's "General Principles of Parochial Relief."*

"We see by the evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons, now sitting (1837), that the labouring man's wages are reduced in the south to five shillings per week. This is acknowledged by the Poor-Law Commissioner himself. Let the New Bill be a year or two firmly rooted in the north, and you will speedily feel, to the same extent, its degrading and pinching influence."—*Blakey's "Letters to the Mechanics and Labouring Men of the North of England."*

"I know that the tendency of the law is not to *advance* the wages of the labourer."—*The Suffolk Juror.*

"I said to a man, the other day, 'Whom are you working with?' 'Oh! at my old place, Sir; I have *never* worked anywhere else.' 'Oh, no! I don't mean at what place: I can remember you upon that farm nearly forty years'—see how the poor creatures stick to the land! 'I mean, whom do you work with—who is your partner in work?' 'Oh, my old partner, Tom, Sir.' 'What are you doing?' 'Thrashing, Sir; but we can *only* earn eight shillings a-week!'"—*Ibid.*

"The Spitalfields' weavers, not one in a hundred of them, after working twelve hours a-day, can *earn twelve shillings a-week*; and the handloom weavers of the north cannot, with all their toil, earn more than *seven shillings a-week*. I have known girls, eight years of age, working at the anvil, making nails from six in the morning until eight or nine at night, and on

Friday, all night long, and, after all, could not earn more than *one shilling and sixpence a-week*. The mother of one of them worked equal time, and whilst she was at work, one of her children was burnt almost to a cinder, and she could only *earn three shillings a-week*; whilst the grandmother could get no more than *one shilling and sixpence!*"—*Rev. J. R. Stephens's Sermon*, preached May 12, 1839.

"Wages had not risen, but, on the contrary, were *reduced* in Bedfordshire."—*Mr. Fielden's Speech*, Feb. 20, 1838.

"It had been said that wages had advanced since the New Poor-Law Act had passed, and that in the south of England they had been *as low as six shillings a-week* before that measure came into operation. Now he could only say, that as far as his recollection went, wages had never been lower than 10s. to 12s. a-week, and he knew that there had been no increase of wages since the Poor-Law Act came into operation."—*Mr. Darby, House of Commons*, Feb. 20, 1838.

"POOR-RATES. — Saturday, a large number of the inhabitants of the parish of Heston appeared before the magistrates at Brentford, for the purpose of applying to be relieved from the payment of poor-rates. Some of them stated their wages amounted to only 12s. per week, out of which they had, in some instances, to support ten children. Others were widows, and persons upwards of eighty years of age, several of whom are at the present moment in the receipt of parochial relief. Most of them were relieved by the Bench, with the concurrence of the overseers; a few were ordered to pay forthwith, and the remainder were directed to pay 6d. per week until the rate was dis-



charged.”—*Globe*. [This is another giving way of the New Poor-Law, part of the administration of which was to oppress the poorest with the demand of the rates.—*Ed. Champion*, Aug. 25, 1839.]

“He would prophesy, that as soon as the railroad labours were concluded, they would see wages reduced to a starving point.”—*Mr. T. Attwood, House of Commons*, July, 1839.

“The workhouse scheme, say the friends of the Poor-Law, is the grand method to raise wages; I maintain, that it is the sure method to reduce them: how many orders for admission into the workhouse have been issued by the Board during the past year? I venture to guess, hundreds, and why so few accepted? because, since the character of the house has become known, the poor will not take advantage of it as a refuge from pinching want and half starvation; labouring men prefer working on two meals a-day, and spending their evenings with their wives and children, rather than submit to irksome confinement, bacon-water, thin pea-soup, skilful gruel, and family separation: the workhouse must be raised to a much higher standard before it can have any other tendency than that of lowering wages.”—*Rev. Stephen Butler’s “Letter to the Ratepayers of the Droxford Union.”*

“DEFINITION OF COMFORT.—MERE STATISTICS OF WAGES, &c., INSUFFICIENT TO ATTEST THE PRESENCE OF COMFORT.—What constitutes the well-being of a man? Many things; of which the wages he gets, and the bread he buys with them, are but one preliminary item. Grant, however, that the wages were the whole: that once knowing the wages and the price of bread, we know all; then what are the wages? Statistic inquiry, in its present unguided condition, cannot tell. The average rate of a day’s wages is not correctly ascertained for any portion of this country; not only not for half centuries, it is not even ascertained anywhere for decades or for years: far from instituting comparisons with the past, the present itself is unknown to us. And then, given the average of wages, what is the constancy of employment? what is the difficulty of finding employment? the fluctuation from season to season, from year to year? Is it constant, calculable wages; or fluctuating, incalculable—more or less of the nature of gambling? This secondary circumstance, of quality in wages, is, perhaps, even more important

than the primary one of quantity. Further, we ask, can the labourer, by thrift and industry, hope to rise to mastership? or is such hope cut off from him? How is he related to his employer? by bonds of friendliness and mutual help, or by hostility, opposition, and chains of mutual necessity alone? In a word, what degree of resentment can a human creature be supposed to enjoy in that position? With hunger preying on him, his contentment is likely to be small. But even with abundance, his discontent, his real misery may be great. The labourer’s feelings, his notion of being justly dealt with or unjustly; his wholesome composure, frugality, prosperity in the one case; his recklessness, gin-drinking, and gradual ruin in the other, how shall figures of arithmetic represent all this? So much is still to be ascertained; much of it by no means easy to be ascertained. Till among the ‘Hill Cooly’ and ‘Dog-cart’ questions, there arise, in Parliament, and extensively out of it, a ‘Condition-of-England question,’ and quite a new set of inquirers and methods, little of it is likely to be ascertained.”—“*Chartism*,” by *Thomas Carlyle*.

“His opinion of the law was, that it was intended to make the labourer live on less wages, and to make him at the same time do more work for a smaller remuneration.”—*Gen. Johnson, Freemasons’ Tavern*, Feb. 19, 1838.

“He had heard of cases in Cambridge-shire, in which a labourer accepted, and endeavoured to exist, on half-a-crown a-week.”—*Earl Stanhope, House of Lords*, March 20, 1838.

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“COPY OF THOMAS TURNER’S LETTER TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE NEW POOR-LAW AMENDMENT-ACT.

“I now state to your honours, that I am a labouring man, belonging to the parish of Guestling, in the county of Sussex. I lived in the parish of Brede for nearly forty-seven years, and I oftentimes applied to the Hastings Board of Guardians for some assistance to support my family. But they always denied to give me anything. But they told me they could not relieve me unless I was in my own parish, and then they could relieve me, as I have a family of nine children, and six of them lay on my hands for support. I hired a cottage in the parish of Guestling, in the Hastings Union, and I moved into the parish of Guestling on

the 17th of June last, when I had but one shilling in the world; and I sent one of my children to the shop with that one shilling to get food for eight in family, and I went to the Relieving Officer, and told him the distressed state I was in, and ask him to relieve me—but he would not relieve me; and, on the 20th day of June, my wife went before the Board of Guardians, and asked them for relief. But they would not relieve us at all, and we were all in a strange place; and I have oftentimes applied to the Board of Guardians since—but they always deny me. They say they do not dare to relieve me, for the Commissioners, would not let them relieve me, or else they should be happy to relieve me. The Guardians of Guestling parish tell me they should be very happy to give me four or five gallons of flour per week, if they dared to give it me—for you, the said Commissioners, would not let them relieve me.

“Please your honours, my shoes are quite worn out, and my feet go on the ground, and have done for this six weeks. I have applied to the Board of Guardians of the Hastings Union for this last three weeks for a pair of half-boots, and some flour or money to help support my family, but they will not give me neither shoes, nor flour, nor money. They deny to relieve me in any way, and say that you, the said Commissioners, will not let them.

“Please your honours, when I work all the week I earn twelve shillings, but I oftentimes lose a day or two in a week; but if I work the whole of my time, my income is only twelve shillings per week, for eight in family to subsist on, and we are all so weak and feeble that we are troubled to get about, and I am very much troubled to get to my work.

“Please your honours, the flour that I require for my family is eight gallons, at 1s. 5d. per gallon, and that amounts to 11s. 4d., and the rent of my cottage is two shillings per week, and I cannot get firing under two shillings per week, which, with the flour, rent, and firing, amounts to 15s. 4d. per week, and my income is only 12s. per week, and how can I pay 15s. 4d. with 12s.? And then we have nothing for meat, cheese, nor butter—no sugar nor tea—and my wife a child to suck, and no tea nor sugar, it is a very hard case, and not a sixpence for clothing them. And I most sincerely hope that you, the Right Honourable Commissioners, will have the goodness to return me a few lines in

answer to this, so that I may know whether the laws of England are for a working, industrious, and sober man to go bare-footed and almost starved, or not. Direct to me to Thomas Turner, Guestling, near Hastings.—I remain, your honours’ humble subject,

“THOMAS TURNER.

“November 18th, 1839.

“Should your honours wish to know my character, you can apply to the clergymen, churchwardens, or overseers of the parish of Brede, in the county of Sussex, or of Mr. George Bishop, of the parish of Northiam—as he was my employer the last seven years I was at Brede.”

“William Holman examined:—I am a farm labourer from Taunton, Somersetshire. My wages are 8s. per week. Sometimes I have received 7s. a-week, and three pints of cider; the latter was worth 1s. 6d. I now receive 1s. instead. My wages have been under the amount last mentioned. The wages are less now than before last Christmas. I have a wife and four children.”—*Evidence taken by the Anti-Poor-Law Delegates*, March, 1840.

“In no one parish which I have visited in Sussex do the regular wages average more than 10s. a-week.”—*Anti-Corn-Law Circular*, Oct. 15, 1839.

“We have the case, this week, of a poor fellow, named Benjamin Ellis, an able-bodied labourer, who, with a wife and eight children, only receives 8s. 6d. a-week wages, out of which he has to pay 1s. 6d. rent. He resides near Olford.”—*Dispatch*, Nov. 11, 1838.

“It is generally known, that, in Wilts, a truly agricultural county, the wages only average 6s. a-week.”—*From a Correspondent*, Oct. 3, 1840.

“The Poor-Law Commissioners and their worshippers, in and out of Parliament, have based their reform upon a series of principles, the soundness of which it may be well to examine. They tell us, that the principle of ‘supply and demand,’ with which it is the height of madness to interfere, furnishes us with a *natural*, and, therefore, a *just*, rate of wages; that it is desirable to take this natural rate as a fixed point from which to start in all our other calculations on the subject; that this natural or just rate of wages may be attained by almost every prudent, honest, and industrious man, and



that whoever does not attain it, must be relieved only by giving him something more disagreeable and undesirable than the receipt of these wages would be. In the very words of the Poor-Law Commissioners, in their report of 1840, on the Continuance of the Commission, 'the only expedient for accomplishing the end in view, which humanity permits, is, to subject the pauper to such a system of labour, discipline, and restraint, as shall be sufficient to outweigh, in his estimation, the advantages which he derives from the bodily comfort which he enjoys.' (Page 28.)

"All this is very logical, no doubt; and as to the exclusive humanity of it, there can be just as little question. But we confess we have a small feeling of apprehension that the premises above stated are not quite so undeniable as logicians and philanthropists would undoubtedly desire to find them; and we, therefore, beg our readers to accompany us for a few moments in considering whether the price (or wages) of labour is fairly determined, as the economists tell us the just price of all other commodities is determined, by the proportion between the supply and the demand. To solve this problem, let us take an individual instance; for in moral questions we distrust most grievously all reasonings which treat men *in masses*, as abstract quantities, without taking into account the essential individuality of every unit of these masses. Let us suppose, then, that a gentleman has a servant to hire; that, in the parish in which he lives, there are ten persons out of employment, who are fit for the situation, and desirous to obtain it; that these ten persons have been long out of work; and that their only hope of escape from starvation is to be found in the chance of getting this situation. Under these circumstances, the supply is out of all proportion to the demand. On the one hand, the gentleman has a servant to hire whom he can, perhaps, do without altogether; on the other, ten persons are driven by hunger to compete for their one only chance of preserving life. The natural operation of demand and supply, would, in this case, induce every one of those men to give the maximum of his daily labour for the minimum of daily wages. Here, therefore, the mathematical principles of the economists reduce wages to the very lowest point that can support human existence; the coarsest food, the smallest quantity of food, one corner of a room, or the shady

side of a hedge, rags and tatters pinned together so as just to cover his nakedness. All this time we suppose the employer fully able to afford higher wages, without putting himself to any inconvenience. We ask, then, whether the principles of the economists apply to such a case as this? Because a poor starving wretch would fain fill his belly with the husks which the swine are eating, is the employer justified in screwing him down to the very lowest fraction of a farthing, upon the principles of demand and supply? To the question so stated, not even an economist, we believe, would return any but a negative answer.

"Well then; the *natural* rate of wages is not always the *just* rate. Before any existing rate of wages can be proved to be just, there are two circumstances to be taken into account, besides the fact that they are *natural*. The one is—their *sufficiency* to maintain a man, his wife, and children, in the reasonable enjoyment of life; the other is—the *ability* of the employer to give more if the existing rate is insufficient.

"What is true of individuals is true also of communities; when you are sure that you take into account, in the case of the community, all the circumstances which you would take into account in judging of individuals. The existing rate of wages for any class of labouring men in this country is not just, merely because it is the natural rate, because the poor have been pressed down to it by the natural operation of competition. Two other circumstances have to be taken into account in this case as well as in the former. Can the labourers and their families live in reasonable comfort by the existing rate? If they cannot, is the existing rate the very highest that their employers are able to dole out to them? If both these questions can be answered in the negative, then, though their amount be what is called *natural*, though supply and demand, competition, and all other principles of political economy, have been left to work unimpeded, wages are unjustly low.

"What is there in the principle of competition which should lead us to imagine that the natural result of it in this particular case must be justice? Every feature of it that we can discern leads us rather to the very opposite conclusion. In the struggle of capital against labour, if, as political economy teaches, the money-getting motives are to

bear sovereign sway, untempered by charity, justice, or fear, we, for our parts, see no chance for poor unprotected labour. In the first place, capital is accumulated labour. In the market, a capital of £1,000 a-year is the representative of the labour of twenty men whose labour is worth £50 a-year. The capitalist of £1,000 a-year wields in his own hand the power of twenty such men—speaking in a *money* point of view. The competition, then, of such a labourer against such a capitalist is the competition of a single individual against twenty. When two such unequal powers try their strength together, there needs no power of prophecy to tell which must prove the weakest.

“In the second place, it is the competition of men to whom increase of wages is an increase of food, and other necessities of life, against a man to whom an increase of profits is an increase only of the vanities or luxuries of life. It is the competition of the dinner against the service of plate. The one man cannot wait for his dinner; the other can wait for his splendour. The workman, if he does not speedily come to terms with his employer, must starve; the employer, if he does not speedily come to terms with his workman, merely loses a market, and, perhaps, retrenches a superfluity.

“In this unequal contest of beggary against riches, of hunger against luxury, we confess we see few elements of justice. The natural result of such a contest, if no sense of equity, or no sense of fear interpose to mitigate the relentless demands of avarice, must be grievous wrong. Competition alone, the struggle of the strong against the weak, must end in the discomfiture of the weak. We are almost ashamed to repeat these truisms, which are yet practically denied and laughed to scorn by the men to whom the wisdom of both parties in the state has entrusted the management of the poor. What temperaments, then, what mitigations of this natural injustice does the nature of the case admit of?

“First let us place that natural sense of fairness, charity, and good feeling, which meet the economists at every step, and (blessed be God for it!) disturb the operation of their rigid principles. This country is indeed in a wretched condition, if, in thousands of instances, these feelings do not secure for the workman higher wages than mere competition would allow him.

Secondly, *fear*;—the fear of Glasgow Thuggery, the dread of vitriol bottles, pikes, and torches, lucifer matches, Swing burnings, Ashton explosions, Dublin slat-ings, and all the other milder expedients by which individual labour strives to become combined and accumulated labour, and thus to secure for itself that standing in the field of competition, that fair and adequate protection, which the Mammonry of this age has refused to give it.

“Thirdly, private charity; all too inadequate in this self-applauding age to bear half the burden of which the whole was borne by the Catholic charity of the unenlightened middle ages.

“Fourthly, public or legal charity; the creation of modern times, invented to supply the deficiencies of that private liberality which was the glory of our pious ancestors.

“Let us suppose for a moment the existence of a state of things in which all classes of society are living in tolerable comfort; wages reasonably high, work abundant, and the profits of capital good, without being excessive. Let us suppose that, by the operation of some accidental cause, such as a rapid increase of profits, the higher and middle classes are suddenly tempted to augment the splendour and magnificence of their living, lose their old virtues of sobriety and moderation of life, become ostentatious, vain, and fond of display. Let us suppose, too, that the causes which produced this change of living suddenly cease to operate. Let us suppose that when this change of manners and of life has been confirmed into a habit, profits suddenly fall even lower than their former moderate amount. Let us suppose, along with this disastrous change, that vanity, shame, and custom combine to deter these middle and lower classes from returning to their old mode of life, and render it a sort of desperate necessity for them to make large fortunes at any risk. If, at the best, the competition between capital and labour is an unequal struggle, what must it become now? The capitalist, to satisfy the cravings of his ostentation, must pinch and grind down every one who is weaker than himself, and from whom a profit can be made. A great part of the expenses of his factory or his farm consists of wages. These wages must be reduced at all hazards. As this vanity of his is not a personal failing, but a general disease, it produces a general tendency in the same direction. All capitalists, or the great



bulk of them, have large fortunes to make and desire to cut a dash; and, therefore, all of them do their utmost to keep down wages, to grind down the poor. On the other hand, the working man, his logical faculty stimulated by his empty belly and his famished children, argues that this unnatural co-operation on one side must be met by effective union on the other, and, accordingly, we have trades' unions and all that complicated machinery, the fruit of whose working is too often naked and cold-blooded murder.

"Such is the natural, and even necessary, result of 'supply and demand,' left to rule unchecked in these times of ours. The hunger of vanity, on the one hand, crushing the unprotected in the dust; on the other, the hunger of the belly striving to redress the injustice by the most horrible systematic outrage and crime.

"Now, while this frightful intestine war is yet waging, suppose a humane, and sagacious legislature were to step in between the contending parties, and were to say to them, 'This state of things shall be no longer. It is not right that five, or it may be *ten*, people should have to starve on seven or nine shillings a-week, while dukes live magnificently on £60 an hour. It is not right that the whole weight of this great transition should be made to fall upon the poor. It is not right, while the country is augmenting her wealth, that the artisan, by whom that wealth has its being, should starve or exist more miserably than the brute beasts. The annual income of this country is sufficient to provide for each man, who is willing to labour, a comfortable subsistence; otherwise these riches of ours are but a more elaborate poverty. While our income is thus sufficient, the means of so living must be secured to him. As in a family, so in a state; first necessities, then comforts, and, lastly, luxuries. First, let all the people be fed, clothed, and housed. Secondly and thirdly, let the comforts and luxuries of those who are further removed from poverty be rigidly secured to them. To parody a maxim of Mr. Burke, 'the first creditor of every country is the belly.' This demand must be satisfied before any other claim is taken into account. We will therefore enact a law whereby every man, woman, and child shall have a legal claim to such support as will make life tolerable. Henceforth it shall be a recognized principle that if wages are offered to a man at five shillings a-week, or seven

shillings a-week, or at any other starving or unendurable rate, the man shall be at liberty to say, 'I will take no such wages. I will not work for you and starve. If you will not pay me in one shape, you shall in another. If you will not give me wages, you shall give me poor-rate. The state is bound to provide all her children who are willing to work for her, with food, clothing, and shelter, so long as she is able to do so. She is now notoriously able to do so, and, therefore, I will take no such wages as you offer me. The present rate of wages is a flagrant injustice. Until wages rise above a starving rate, I prefer to live on the bounty of the state rather than accept the wages which you talk of.'

"Would there, we ask, be anything very revolting or absurd in a law framed on these principles? in a law thus humanely striving to protect the poor from the standing injustice of the rich?

"Now, suppose such a law already in existence; but defiled and injured by many practical abuses. What would be thought of the wisdom of the legislator who, under pretence of removing these abuses, proposed to remove the law altogether, and the principle on which it was based? What would be thought of a legislator enacting a different, or rather opposite, principle? Declaring that the natural, that is, the *starving*, rate of wages is the just and expedient one; taking *that* as the thing to be maintained and defended at all hazards, even though too often *below* the starving point, as in Ireland; depriving the poor man of every protection against the rich; leaving poverty to cope single-handed with wealth; holding out to the poor man redress of grievances by telling him that his poverty comes from his imprudence; and promising to lead him into happiness by placing before him, on the one hand, wages at or below the starving point; and, on the other, public relief on terms which will be more unendurable than even this miserable income.

"What should we think of such legislators? We should pronounce them irrecoverably mad; and if they desired to carry such a law into operation, we should recommend them to untenant the strongest wards in Bedlam to find fit agents for the accomplishment of their ridiculous designs.

"But, alas, this very ridiculous law is the very one under which the English poor are now living. This insane scheme

has met with the approval of the legislature. This gigantic phrenzy is no delirious imagination, but a practical existing fact. We are at present living under the empire of this astounding absurdity.

"The rulers of the poor are men who tell us, that the actual or natural rate of wages is always just. They kindly inform us, that at this point they design to keep them until the rich shall find it convenient to raise them of their own free will. They abhor combinations of workmen, the excesses of private charity, the humane weaknesses of ordinary minds. They denounce every artificial interference with the natural relations of supply and demand, to whatever depth—*plus quam Hibernicum*—in the infinite abyss of misery those relations may lead. And they avow an intention of raising wages by leaving, and even compelling, each individual poor man to fight the battles of avarice single-handed with the powerful combination of wealth with which his bargains have always to be made.

"Oh, profound wisdom! Wonderful humanity! Miraculous offspring of the enlightenment of these latter days! At the risk of being told by the Commissioners that we express our dissent from their wisdom merely 'with the natural desire of producing an acceptable commodity for our readers,' we cannot but repeat our abhorrence of this entire system of mechanical inhumanity. We tell the calculating machines of Somerset-house, that their true function is to raise the rate of wages, by enabling the poor man to refuse wages scandalously low without his being subjected to the alternative of famine. We tell them, that the natural rate of wages is constantly tending to injustice, and that one main purpose of a Poor-Law is to redress that tendency. We tell them—what they do not know—that a man differs from a piece of calico. To a piece of calico it makes no matter at what price it is sold. To a man it does make some difference what price is paid for his labour. We tell them, that it is no consolation to a man, with an empty belly and a dying wife, to be told that the natural valuation of his week's labour, on the principle of 'supply and demand,' is five shillings. We tell them, that the poor have a right to the protection of the state against the callous injustice of those men who wish them to work and starve upon any such allowance; and that the business of a Poor-Law is to wrest this instrument of torture out of the iron gripe

of capitalists and speculators. We tell them, too, that if they will not protect the poor, the poor will combine to protect themselves. If they will spend their days and nights in making public relief as much more unendurable than nine shillings a week as it can possibly be made, they will have murders at Ashton, and vitriol bottles at Glasgow, and *slating* at Dublin, to the end of time.

"The subject is a wide one, and we have not space to pursue it further at the present moment. We shall conclude with expressing our firm belief, that the only good point about the working of the New Law has been the introduction of a more stringent check on local jobbing; but that in every other particular, from the first principle down to the last detail, the reformed system is a most disastrous and fatal mistake."—*The Tablet*, April 17, 1841.

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"LABOURERS' WAGES.—At a late agricultural dinner at Saffron Walden, considerable force was laid by several of the speakers on the necessity of an advancement in the wages of the labourers. 'When,' said Lord Rayleigh, 'I look to the coming winter, and see that the quarter loaf is likely to get dearer rather than cheaper, it will be our duty to anticipate any demand for wages amongst the poor, so that, if there should be a cry out amongst the manufacturers at the dearth of bread, our labourers, instead of joining in that cry, may be able to say, 'We have found masters who have given us a portion of their advantages, and whether bread be cheap or dear, our masters shall have our good will.' Mr. Fiske urged the farmers, now that they were making a good price of their wheat, to pay their labourers in proportion; and Mr. Gent added—'The landlords, when times were bad, went hand in hand with you and reduced your rents, do you in turn assist the labourer? The Poor-Law has clipped his wings, and given an advantage to you farmers in the rates, and, as the labourer is essential to the cultivation of the soil, do not crush and trample on him. If wheat continues at this price, you must increase his wages, therefore do it with a good grace.' These observations were received with cheers of approbation, which showed that the farmers of the neighbourhood felt their applicability; and from what we know of the hearts and feelings of the agriculturists, we are certain the remarks fell not upon



a soil where they will be permitted to wither and perish, without producing any practical result. The wages which were paid to the labourers in many parishes under the old system of Poor-Laws, ought to be no criterion for regulating the payment now. What the farmer paid his workmen on the Saturday night was but an instalment of his wages; he paid the remainder in the shape of poor-rates, and it was doled out to the labourer in the humiliating shape of relief; and if this secondary spring of reward—for reward for services it in many instances substantially was—be dried up, as it has been by the operation of the New Poor-Law, and direct wages be not increased, what can prevent the labourer regarding a wise and necessary measure as a means of increasing those hardships to which his station naturally subjects him? We may talk to him of the comfort and honest pride to which the independent spirit of his forefathers led—we may say to him, ‘Be ye clothed, and be ye warmed;’ but if we give him not a patch for his tattered garment, and fling not a faggot on his winter hearth, our exhortations will sound to him as the voice of mockery. With regard to the mode in which a rise of wages should be made, it is difficult to fix on any general rule. As customs vary in different neighbourhoods, and as the value of a labourer ought to be estimated by his skill and industry, and not by the number of his family—for that would increase the depressing evils of improvident marriages—it must be left to the consideration of the farmers in the different districts. They, we are sure, will not disregard the feeling which is abroad on the subject. Let them talk over the matter at the vestry meeting or the market table—let them treat it with the liberality which the energies of the times require, and they will find their reward in the improved conduct and improved appearance of their dependents—while the blessings of the poor shall rise from a thousand cottages as a thank-offering to that Being who directs the storm, the pestilence, and mildew, and who, for seasons past, has clothed their fields with the full richness of plenteous harvests.” — *Chelmsford Chronicle*, Dec. 2, 1838.

“He (Mr. Villiers) did not believe that the people of this country were ever in a worse condition; in every manufacturing district might be obtained details of the greatest physical suffering. The hon. mem-

ber here read a number of letters from the manufacturing districts. A letter from Preston, dated the 10th of May, 1841, stated, that the number of empty houses was 1,220; that the increase in the number of paupers in the Preston Union, which was last year 127 per cent., was 40 per cent. on that of the preceding year; that 1,330 poor had been relieved last winter; that crime had increased 37 per cent.; that the means of employment were reduced, and all kinds of artisans were walking about with nothing to do. A letter from Bolton, dated the 12th of May, stated, that the number of empty houses was 1,400; that in Little Bolton, consisting of 300 houses, 23 families were without any bed at all; 42 lay seven in a bed; 78, six in a bed; 185, five in a bed; 432, four in a bed; and 582, three in a bed; that, of 1,025 persons, 511 received on an average 1s. 6d. a-week; 359, 2s. a-week; and 155, 2s. 6d. a-week. At Blackburn, a great number of houses were empty, and 100 cottages could pay no rent. At Oldham, thirteen mills were at a stand, and the people were in the greatest distress. At Nottingham, some of the artisans were seen eating from a swill-tub, the wash for pigs. At Crompton, near Oldham, the writer of a letter stated, a cow had lately died, and after it had been dead a day and a-half, twenty females came to the farmer and asked if they might have the carcass, and, receiving his permission, they took it up, and divided the carrion amongst their families, declaring that it was the first meat they had tasted for several months. The hon. member then read some extracts from the report on handloom weavers, in which it was stated, that at Belfast, in Ireland, a kind of hog-wash, called ‘sowens,’ was sold to the people, and was eaten for breakfast; that in the north of England, animal food was almost unknown, and the want of it was undermining the constitution of the people; that the medical men declared that they were obliged to give tonics, but all the people wanted was mutton and beef.”—*Mr. Villiers, House of Commons*, May 17, 1841. [This vapouring V—— is a great Poor Bastile man, and all the facts he has mentioned in his speech, of which this is a *patch*, are illustrative of the evil working of the New Poor-Law, and not of the *lack* of Corn-Law Repeal, and the ingress of slavish sweets. He has, in fact, filched his *data* from *us*, the New Poor-Law Opposition, and used the

same to bolster up the tottering tyranny of the base, brutal, and bloody Whigs. As for the Crompton cow affair, that is a twice twenty times told tale; it will be found, with proper dates, in section *Bastile Food* of this work.....The idea of a New Poor-Law butcher prating of the sufferings of the poor, when he, and such as he, have made them what they are, is excellent! And then, what good will cheap sugar or cheap bread be to the inmates of the Union workhouses—the specimens of each which they obtain in those hell-holes are cheap enough already, cheap and nasty, for sugar they never taste, and the bread which is dealt out to them by the ounce, is made of best seconds' flour, *alias* belly-gripping grits and Bridgewater workhouse murdering *medicated* mixtures. The idea of cheap bread and cheap sugar from those who have been in the cruel habit of giving stones for the one, and serpents for any little necessities like the other, beats the most flourishing blarney black and blue, and makes one suspect the Corn-Law repealing Whigs have calculated *too largely* on the *swallow* of the people. The thousands of poor creatures who have suffered the utmost rigour of the (Poor) Law, and have been *murdered* in cold blood in the Bastiles, will cause their new "*boons*" to stick in the *poma Adami* of those whom they wish *once yet again* to become their dupes and victims! —G. R. Wythen Baxter.]

"STATE OF BOLTON.—Distress in the manufacturing districts is daily becoming deeper and deeper. In Bolton there are 1,053 empty houses, of which about 60 are shops, many of them in the main streets. There is at least £3,000 per week less paid in wages than three years ago. The shopkeepers are in great difficulties. There were, a short time ago, three sales of the property of shopkeepers in one day. All the mills, except five, are working short time, three or four days a-week. South of Bolton, four miles, a large spinning establishment, which gave employment to 800 hands, has been entirely stopped for six months. The proprietor has 128 cottages empty, or paying no rent. Entering Bolton from Manchester there is another mill, where there are 200 hands, but which has been entirely stopped for more than twelve months. North of Bolton, another spinning establishment has been entirely standing some weeks, on which 1,100 persons were dependent for subsistence.

The consequent misery and destitution are extreme. A few days ago, 500 persons were relieved by the Poor-Law Guardians in one day, in amounts varying from 6d. to 1s. 6d. per head per week. In some cases, there are two or three families living in one house. In one case, seventeen persons were found in a dwelling less than five yards square. In another, eight persons, with two pairs of looms and two beds, were found in a cellar, six feet under ground, and measuring about four yards by five. The out-door relief to the poor is three times greater in amount than in the average of three years, 1836, 1837, and 1838. It is impossible to convey by words even a faint idea of the patient suffering of thousands of the labouring classes. The debts to shopkeepers, and the unpaid house rents, will amount to many thousands during the present year, and distraints for rent are taking place daily. The distress in all the manufacturing towns of this district, is probably as deep as it is in Bolton. Nor is it confined to Lancashire. We learn, that of *thirty-five* worsted spinning-mills in Leicester and its neighbourhood, only six are in full work. At Paisley, too, there are about *fifteen hundred* persons out of employment. The distress arising from want of work, and from low wages, is greatly aggravated by the high price of bread; and it will be increased in intensity by the cold weather that we may expect for the next three months; for a great portion of the working classes have had nothing to spare for the purchase of bed and body clothing."—*Manchester Times*.

"STATE OF OLDHAM.—At Oldham, the poor-rates of this year are just double what they were last year; and we learn that nearly, if not quite, 1,000 cottages are empty, the miserable people, who are thrown out of work, being obliged to herd together, several families in one small house—an exhibition which has been described to us as the counterpart of Dr. Doyle's horrifying picture of the misery of an Irish town."—*Champion*, Dec. 15, 1839.

[From the *Wiltshire Independent*.]

"WRETCHED STATE OF FARM LABOURERS.

"In many parts of the county the condition of this useful, honest, and deserving class of men, is still most pitiable; bread, the article on which three-fourths, at least, of their earnings are generally



expended, continues extravagantly dear, while their wages remain miserably low—9s. a-week being the *maximum* in most parishes.

“Almost all the present race of labourers well remember the proportion which bread and wages bore one to the other only a very few years ago; they remember, that when bread was scarcely half the price, wages were within a shilling or eighteenpence a-week of what they are now: they contrast their present state with their condition at that time.

“The New Poor-Law Bill, which we are willing to believe was intended merely to put a stop to those abuses which were so frequently practised by the lazy and dissolute, and which, when fairly and honestly administered, has a salutary tendency, is, we are afraid, in many instances, being taken advantage of to the prejudice of the labourer, and, instead of being confined to its legitimate purpose, *converted into an auxiliary for reducing wages to an amount barely sufficient to procure the commonest necessities of life.*

“A most flagrant case has recently come to our knowledge; but, although we are perfectly satisfied of its truth, we abstain from giving names, wishing to prevent a recurrence of such conduct, rather than to hold up the parties to public odium.

“A labourer, living in a village in this county, who, although a strong able-bodied man, has never received *more than seven shillings* a-week, but frequently much less, being out of work, went round the parish to seek a job. He was not very successful, the only offer he met with being *five shillings* a-week during the winter, and *six shillings* in the summer, and, be it observed, *only on condition that he would agree to work on these terms for an entire year.* The poor fellow did not feel disposed to do this, so he tried round the parish again; but, as it was known that he had had an offer, he was told to go back to the farmer who had made it. He did so, and after some talking, it was improved to six shillings a-week, winter and summer, *but still the condition that it should be binding for a whole year was insisted on.* The labourer was anxious to earn his living, *even on these terms*, until something better should fall in his way, and expressed his willingness to do so, but the farmer was inexorable—a year’s work for this miserable pittance, or no work at all. The man, na-

turally enough, refused the terms, and made fresh applications to other employers, but the only answer he got was, ‘Go to Mr. —.’ He then, as a last resource, went to the Union-house, and applied to be relieved or admitted as an inmate; this was refused by the Relieving Officer, who told him, that it was no use his coming there, for, as he had an offer of work, he could neither be relieved nor be admitted.

“Comment on such a case as this is unnecessary, the facts speak for themselves. The corn-laws, on one side, enhance the price of food without producing an increase in wages; the administrators of the Poor-Law, on the other, refuse either relief or shelter to any man who has the offer of work, let the wages be ever so inadequate. Thus is the unhappy labourer driven either to sell his labour at half price—to beg, to steal, or to starve.”—*Champion*, Jan. 26, 1840.

[From the *Wiltshire Independent*.]

“A fortnight ago we mentioned the case of labourer, an able-bodied married man, who, being unable to procure higher wages than 6s. a-week, and those only on condition that he would bind himself to work at that rate for an *entire year*, had applied at the Union-house, either to be relieved temporarily, or to be admitted, and had been refused both applications, because an offer of work had been made him—no regard being had as to whether at wages which were a fair and honest remuneration for his services or not. Having made further inquiries into this affair, we find, that on a second application at the house, the poor fellow was told, that if he did not go to work on the terms offered, he would be sent to prison. The result is, that he is now working for 6s. a-week, the stipulation for the *year’s service* at that price, having been *at last* abandoned.

“It may be said, that the case we have mentioned above, is a solitary one; perhaps, as to the circumstances under which the agreement to work at 6s. a-week was enforced, it is so; but in hundreds of instances, equally low wages are given. Even at threshing, not by the day but by the piece—at which men generally earn higher wages than at day-work—we have been informed of cases where the earnings have not exceeded 7s. a-week.

“In the southern part of this county, 6s. a-week is commonly given to agricul-

tural labourers. Within the last fortnight, at the petty sessions held at Salisbury, a farmer, living at Durnford, was summoned by a labourer, named Blake, for refusing to pay him 6s. 6d. for a week's work. The complainant stated, that he worked on '*the stem*,' sometimes for one master, sometimes for another, at 6s. 6d. a-week, the rate agreed to by the farmers at a vestry meeting. His employer had refused to pay him more than 6s., which Blake would not accept, as it was not sufficient to maintain himself and wife. The master, in his defence, told the magistrates, that the farmers of Durnford had '*stemmed*' the surplus labourers of that parish at 6s. per week, which was as much as they could afford to pay. The Bench expressed their surprise—as well they might—at the practice pursued by the farmers at Durnford towards the labourers, and ordered the defendant to pay Blake the full amount of wages agreed on, 6s. 6d., and to remunerate him for his loss of time in seeking redress."—*Wiltshire Independent*.

["What may be the etymological derivation of this term, we do not know. But 'the stem' or 'stemming' is used in Wiltshire to denote that pinching kind of employment which a large part of the labourers there have to put up with. The farmers apportion among themselves just a sufficient number of men to do the work of their farms; not enough to cultivate the farms *well*, but barely enough to do that which *must not be left undone*. To those men they pay 7s., 8s., or 9s. a-week. This arrangement generally leaves a large number of men unemployed; and the farmers, who are very willing to avail themselves of the service of these 'surplus labourers,' as they choose to term them, fix a rate of wages for them *just above the sum which it would cost to maintain them, with their families, in the Union-house*. They then apportion these 'surplus labourers' among themselves, according to the size of their farms, and then they take it by turns to employ them; and this the farmers call 'stemming' the labourers; and the labourers call it working on 'the stem,' to which, as described in the above account, they are obliged to submit."—*Ed. Champion*, Feb. 2, 1840.]

"He would just read what had taken place the other day at the Mansion-house, before Mr. Alderman Wilson, relative to the relief of the poor. Miller, the Re-

lieving Officer of the West London Union, stated, that 'he was frequently obliged to make his escape by the back way to avoid the violence of the poor, who were waiting in front. It was impossible that the present state of things could continue.' On a subsequent occasion he said, 'These destitute objects had become so exasperated, and so reckless of life, he was afraid they would commit murder.' The same day Thwaites, the Relieving Officer of the City of London Union, stated, that his Union had relieved 6,000 destitute persons since January last. It was impossible to give any idea of their distress. Hundreds of able-bodied working men were coming to him actually in a famishing condition. (Hear, hear.) These were not solitary instances. He would conduct them to the manufacturing districts, and point out to them the distress which really existed; and if hon. gentlemen opposite could not deny the statement, he hoped he should hear no more of sympathy for the population of Cuba and Brazil. (Hear, hear.) He would first refer to the state of Bethnal-green. In one instance, three families, with four or five children each, resided in one house of only four rooms. In another case, the family had only straw to lie upon; they had only three chairs, no spoon, and but one old kettle among them. Some of them (females) were so badly clothed, that they could not leave the room. The youngest child, nine weeks old, had never yet slumbered on anything but old rags. He would now refer to Marylebone, a district of the metropolis, in which the greatest misery prevailed, close to the walks of splendour and fashion. Countless masses of human beings were starving at their very doors. In 26 houses, the average number of rooms was nine, and of inhabitants, 882, of whom 162 were married couples, with 345 children; 66 widowers or widows, with 94 children; 21 single males, and 22 single females. The average space allotted to each family was 11 feet by 10. In 126 of these families, parents slept in the same room with their children; in 132 families, youths and children of both sexes, and all ages, slept together in one room. (Hear.) Such was the state of the poor in some parts of the metropolis. He would now go to Birmingham. What had been the want and distress of the labouring class there last winter? A relief committee had been formed, consisting chiefly of Conservatives, and what



was the result of their labours? They made a report to the benevolent individuals who had subscribed to the funds they had administered, and they said, 'they found, in the distribution of half the sum collected, above 40,000 persons in such a state of destitution, as to be eager and grateful recipients of the amount of relief afforded, being less than  $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. a-head per week; that these individuals were reduced to this extreme suffering and degradation by causes over which they had no control, and from which, therefore, they possessed no means of escape, and that not more than one family in five could by any possibility make any provision for the vicissitudes of trade.' The committee, however, ceased its labours; another committee was formed of working men from the mills, and, after expostulating with the members of the former committee for abandoning so many miserable creatures to their fate without one ray of hope, they reminded them that the difficulty might be got rid of by relieving industry, because then, each would produce five times more than he would have need to consume. (Hear.) Going a little farther north, he found, that in Burton-upon-Trent, four large manufactories had been closed on the 11th of this month, and 500 people thrown out of employment. From the report on the handloom weavers it appeared, that many families were working for less than 1d. per day. In Loughborough, the same state of things prevailed. The people were described as in a state of desperation. An eye-witness said, 'The heart sickens at what I daily witness. It is sufficient to make a wise man mad.' Families of five to seven, were earning only from 4s. to 7s. per week. In one instance, it was stated, a man had cut his finger, and a bread poultice was applied; the next day the poultice was thrown away, and was immediately picked up by some children. They quarrelled who should have it, and ate it voraciously, as if they had not tasted food for a month. (Hear, hear.) Such things as these were a shame to the Government of England. The state of things was not different in Nottingham. They had recently had a lesson from Nottingham. (Hear, hear.) The poor were so much distressed there, that no matter whether he was a Whig or a Tory, or a Radical, the man who professed to be the friend of the poor, was immediately returned to Parliament. (Hear,

hear.) In a statement signed by Mr. Goodacre, the perpetual curate of Sutton-in-Ashfield, the distress was said to be unparalleled; yet it appeared to be increasing, although the rates were so very heavy as to bring the tradespeople, who were doing very little business, to a level with the operative. The families of the poor were nearly naked, and their meagre looks showed that they were suffering hunger. Instances there were, not a few, where one bed of chaff or straw served for a man, his wife, and his children, and that without any covering. (Hear.) In Huddersfield, men were working 14, 16, and even 18 hours a-day, for from 3s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. a-week. He would give another instance from a letter addressed, not by a Chartist, but by a Church-and-State man,\* to the Duke of Wellington. The writer said he could scarcely trust himself to describe the case. It was actually incredible, but nevertheless it was true, and could be proved by incontrovertible evidence. About six miles from Huddersfield, on the edge of the moors, a cow dying of dysentery was considered by the poor weavers as a godsend. They called it a green cake.† (A laugh.) They cut up the cow before it was stiff, and ate the pieces before they were fried. This was the state in which the manufacturing districts of the country were."—*Mr. T. Duncombe, House of Commons, May 17, 1841.*

"*“ Out-door relief,*” we are told, ‘tends to lower the wages of the labouring man;’ and so it may if improperly administered, —but I found the pertinacity of abiding to the *in-door test was secretly working advantageously to the oppressor.* The refusal to give temporary relief to the able-bodied men out of employment, and the offering them the house, *compelled them to take work under the regular fixed price;* and the persons who wish to take advantage of their men, in this way, are fully aware *how this in-door test is operating.* I could relate *some facts* which have come to my knowledge of the *secret working* of the oppressor, in grinding the face of the poor, but will confine myself to the following:—During the time of the great depression in trade, last December (1839), I had been in the habit of visiting a family who were in great distress, and perceiving that they were very clean and steady people, I called several times (unexpected-

\* Mr. Oastler—his Letter to the Duke of Wellington, Oct. 8, 1834.

† It should be a “green tail.”

edly (to see them), and the man became communicative on his manner of living. To meet his difficulty, he weighed the food they had to eat; but the want of employment continuing so long, he was at last necessitated to go to the relieving officer, to ask for an order for the house, being told by his employer he could give him no work. When this man asked for the order, he was told to bring a note from his employer, to say he had no work for him. The man, wanting immediate relief, went for the note; and, after waiting some time, and from what he observed, thinking that there was some contrivance going on between his employer and another person, his mind became prepared to expect an offer of work at an abatement of price. He was told, they would not give a note to say they had no work for him; and the man then said, if you want to reduce the price, give me some work at what price you like, and I will do it; work was then given to him. Thus the poor workmen, having no employment, and being refused temporary relief, are compelled to ask for an order to go into the 'house,' but the master knows they will not go in if they can possibly avoid it, and gets hunger-bitten operatives to secretly submit to work under the regular trade price."—*Roworth's Observations on the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham*, published Nov., 1840.

"Many of the out-door weavers cannot afford to taste meat; many cannot have tea for breakfast. That meal consists of bread and water, and a little salt; it is called 'teakettle tea.' A journeyman weaver, named William Evans, states, that his breakfast is warm water, with a little salt or some pepper in it, and a crust of bread, but he cannot have enough of that at all times. The dinner of a weaver is generally a piece of bread and cheese, or some potatoes, for himself and family, with some fat or 'flick' poured upon them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Francis Berry (of Randwick), out-door weaver, wife and three children. He is in debt for rent—his clothes are pawned—owes £2 to the broker; was in the workhouse ten weeks, now receives 4s. a-week from the parish. Thoroughly understands his calling; is an honest, hard-working man. Cannot earn on an average more than 5s. or 6s. weekly. He has tasted neither tea or sugar for some time, and his breakfast is nothing

more than some bread, hot water and salt."—*Mr. Miles Hand-Loom Commissioners' Report for Gloucestershire*.

"At the time of a sudden depression of trade, when there is a scarcity of work, some masters deal out to the poor their employment to their own great advantage; and there are a variety of ways whereby the poor are defrauded by their employers through not being paid the regular trade price, although the work is given out at such price. A poor man, in such circumstances, came to me to see if I could assist him, but I found his case did not come under any statute by which I could help him; but I made such inquiries of him as enable me to present the following statement of his week's work:—

	s. d.
Making 12 pairs of stockings .....	8 6
Deduct frame rent .....	1 2
— seaming .....	1 0
— winding .....	0 6
— frame standing .....	0 3
	2 11
	5 7
The employer deducted from the trade price	1 6
	4 1

Thus leaving the poor creature, who had been working from Monday morning until Saturday morning, four shillings and a penny!?"—*Roworth's "Observations on the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham."*

"Patrick Beard (of Randwick) out-door weaver, wife, and five children, seven in family; average weekly amount of income, including the earnings of all the family:—

Net income, after deducting rent of room, sleys, quilting, &c. ....	s. d. 7 0
EXPENDITURE.	
Rent .....	2 0
Poor-rate .....	0 3
Firing and Candle .....	1 0
	3 3
Balance left for the weekly food and clothing of family ...	3 9
	7 0

Average, not 1d. per head per day. Price of quartern loaf 8½d., potatoes 10d. per peck.—*Report of Mr. Miles, Hand-Loom Weaver Commissioner, Gloucestershire*.

"He had himself found a weaver in this city (Norwich) who, after working 16 hours a day, could only earn 9s. a-week. This was to support six children, his wife, and himself; and, deducting the out-goings, the earnings just left 1½d.



a-day per head for that family to subsist upon. He could go with the Bishop (of *Norwich*) who had supported the *New Poor-Law* to-morrow, and show him, not one individual case, but a hundred such instances of destitution. He could take the right rev. prelate to houses where the husband worked as a weaver for 18 hours a-day, and yet had nothing but a lock of straw for his wife, his children, and himself to lie on."—*The Operative Hewitt's Speech at the Norwich Anti-Slavery Meeting, Nov. 18, 1840.*

"We are concerned to hear, that, in the parish of St. Owen's alone, 65 able-bodied men were, on Tuesday last, found willing to work for one hundred-weight of coal, and two pounds of bread per man."—*Hereford Times, Jan. 16, 1841.*

"He knew of one parish in Devonshire, in which wages were now at 7s. or 8s. a-week."—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons, Feb. 8, 1841.*

"The rate of wages in this neighbourhood, does not exceed 8s. per week. Whenever a man applies for relief on account of sickness, the general rule of the Board, of which I am a member, is, to inquire, in the first place, what is the amount of the man's earnings? The answer is almost invariably, 8s. Relief is then ordered to an amount not exceeding his usual earnings, in most cases, somewhat less. Thus it is by no means an uncommon thing for a man with five, six, nay, seven, children, to drag on a miserable existence on a shilling, and sometimes less than a shilling per week."—*The Rev. W. W. Gale, Curate of Kingston-Deverill, near Warminster, and Guardian of the Mere Union, his Letter to the "Times," dated Feb. 21, 1841.*

"The rule or order which prohibits the allowance of out-door relief to able-bodied men has been rigidly adhered to in this Union, which comprises thirty-nine parishes, several of which, possessing a large population, are distant more than ten miles, and some other parishes are distant more than eighteen miles, from the work-house, to which the poor are compelled to travel before their claims for relief can be investigated. The strict observance of the aforesaid rule has not effected any increase in the wages of the agricultural labourers residing in this Union, which vary from 6s. to 8s. a-week."—*The Barnstaple Petition, "Times," March 11, 1841.*

"It was urged, that its tendency would be beneficial, that it would tend to raise wages, to give the labouring man an ade-

quate return for his toil, to enable him to lay up, by his own honest industry, for the hour of need, and to render him above the necessity of having recourse to parochial relief. I know that these were the ideas which were entertained, and entertained, perhaps, sincerely. But how was it possible that any man, or set of men, calling themselves senators, or pretending to legislate for this great country, could even suppose that the Bill would operate to the increase of wages, is most marvellous; certainly it does show me, that it is necessary for the people of this country to give their legislators information of the actual state of things, which they are evidently lamentably deficient of; they must have relied on the most inadequate, the most fallacious, sources of intelligence—sources which were not worthy their confidence; they must have listened to absurd theories which could be expected but to deceive them. I ask you, Gentlemen, has the operation of the Act tended to increase the rate of wages in your own neighbourhood? has it tended to make the labourer more independent—to raise him in the scale of society? Or, has it not happened, that ever since the New Law was introduced among us, wages have continued to diminish? I have heard the fact admitted by some of the Board. And how should the Act otherwise than fail in a country where there is a superabundance of labour—where the employers have a choice of hands, and, from their number, and the consequent competition, can always make them work at the cheapest rate? Do gentlemen imagine that able-bodied labourers can be thrown into the 'house' and then be thrown back again to their cottages, just as you can shift a set of nine-pins?"—*Rev. H. Luxmoore's Speech at the Barnstaple Anti-Poor-Law Meeting, Feb. 27, 1841.*

"An agricultural labourer could only afford to have one pair of breeches in thirty-three years; they then weighed forty pounds, with patches. One pair of shoes in a year and a-half—paid for (10s.) by instalments—having one year to pay it."—*Mr. Sydney Smith, the paid Anti-Corn-Law "Ipse Simius," at Chelsea, April 8, 1840.*

"It had been said by the hon. member for Lambeth, that the working of the New Poor-Law had improved the condition of the poor. He admitted, that nothing could be worse than the old system, and that they should not, and could not, revert

to it. Still, he contended, that the measure had failed in one important point—instead of raising the rate of wages, its operation had been to lower them. Rather than submit to the test of the workhouse, the poor would work for less wages.”—*Mr. Hamilton, House of Commons, March 22, 1841.*

“The labourer and the artisan have such a horror of the prisons called Union-houses, where the hallowed union which God has declared man shall not burst asunder, is impiously burst, that they are willing to work for any wages they can obtain; and merciful Mammonites reduce, and reduce, and reduce, until the starvation point is reached, and then either suicide or felony is committed, or the parish, the worst paymaster and the hardest taskmaster, must be resorted to.”—*Frazer's Magazine, April, 1841.*

“It is certain, that the wages of the great mass of labouring poor are barely sufficient to supply them with three-fourths of the sustenance which they require; their employers will give them no more; but the disposition to grant out-door relief shows, that there is no unwillingness to insure them a small allowance in case of sickness, infirmity, misfortune, or age. They are in the condition of soldiers, or public officers, a part of whose earnings are set aside to form a superannuation fund, society stopping their wages, and thus making them, by compulsion, contributors to a friendly insurance or annuity society. We believe that this is not bad political economy. It is attended with none of the ‘danger’ which the Commissioners appear to apprehend. It would, perhaps, be better political economy to pay soldiers, sailors, and officers, a higher rate of remuneration in lieu of pensions: but practical men think differently, and assert, that the certain provision against sickness, age, and infirmity, satisfies the provident, and saves the improvident from much misery. The Poor-Law Amendment-Act, in the hands of the Commissioners, has, to a certain extent, made the parishes so many West Middlesex Companies: they refuse relief from the public fund, to which the labourers of the land have all their lives contributed.”—*Lancet, April 3, 1841.*

“A poor industrious man, of Chalcomb, near this city, earned, owing to the bad yield and short days, by thrashing wheat by the bushel, during the whole of last week, from daylight to dusk—what think you, gentle reader? *Two shillings and*

*elevenpence!!* At the close of the same week, wheat was sold in the Bath market at ninety shillings per quarter.”—*Bath Journal, Jan. 18, 1839.*

“We are informed, that Mr. James Aked, Jun., worsted manufacturer of Midgley, has reduced the wages of his weavers from 8 to 10 per cent. Mr. A. is a liberal Whig corn-law repealer, and a great friend to the New Poor-Law and the Bastile system.”—*Northern Star, May 23, 1840.*

“He had also a petition to present from an individual who was Guardian of the Union of Uckfield. As this petition related principally to matters of local interest, he should not trouble their lordships with a statement of them, but he would call their attention to extracts from the reports of the Poor-Law Commissioners. It was stated in the second Report, p. 313,—‘The farmers admit that they have not too many men, provided they can get their labour at a low rate, and that they hope, by the offer of the workhouse, to succeed in that object,’ thus proving what he had all along stated, that the effect of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act would be to reduce the wages of the labourers.”—*Earl Stanhope, House of Lords, July 22, 1839.*

“AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS.—We regret to hear, that more agricultural labourers are out of employ than is usual at this period of the year. This may be attributed partly to the long course of wet weather, which has retarded farming operations, and partly to the discharge of many from the works on the railway. In one poor-house, in a neighbouring Union, there are now, at least, one hundred more inmates than there were during the corresponding quarter of last year, and the increase is nearly 75 per cent. on the average of former years.”—*Berks Chronicle, quoted by the “Champion,” Jan. 26, 1840.*

“*Wiltshire Independent*, a moderate Whig paper, has an article this week, on the rate of wages. We learn from it, that able-bodied labourers are paid there 5s. and 6s. a-week; and that many families in that county are living on one meal a-day—that meal consisting of potatoes and salt.”—*Champion, Sept. 15, 1839.*

“Lord John Russell stated, on the first day of the slave sugar debate, that there had been a reduction, within the last year, of at least £130,000 in the aggregate amount of wages of the labouring popu-



lation in the Bolton Union; that 'distraints for cottage rents were occurring there daily;' that 'the pawnbrokers' shops were stowed full of the clothing, furniture, and even bedding, of the destitute poor;' that there were 'scores of families with little or no bedding, having pawned or sold it for food;' that a short time ago, 590 persons applied in one day, to the Guardians for relief, and, by way of relief, could obtain only '*amounts varying from sixpence to eighteen-pence per head per week*;' that 'a public subscription, amounting to nearly £2,000 had just been raised to mitigate, in some degree, the sufferings of the destitute poor; *in fact, to deal out a scanty pittance, just sufficient to keep them from actual starvation*, to a body of workmen who possessed, perhaps, greater skill and industry than any population, of similar numbers, on the face of the globe.' 'There were similar accounts,' he added, 'from Manchester and other manufacturing towns, from which, it appeared, that work was generally falling off, and the people with difficulty obtained wages sufficient to support life; and, in the present state of things, there were still apprehensions that they might be yet much worse.'

"Mr. Ward stated, that in Sheffield 'one-third of the working men were out of employment, and the other two-thirds, who were in work, were subscribing, with singular generosity, small sums out of their wages to keep their fellow-labourers off their respective parishes. They had no hope of relief except in emigration, the Union WORKHOUSE, or this measure of the Government' (for lowering the price of sugar by three-fifths of a farthing in the pound). 'The House would hear similar accounts of distress from Leeds, from Manchester, from Oldham, from Paisley, and from other manufacturing places.'

"Mr. C. Wood said, that '*for the last six years*,' (that is, ever since the passing of the New Poor-Law) 'manufacturing wages had been gradually falling off, while agricultural prices had been gradually rising.'

"Mr. Brotherton said, that owing to the distress which prevailed, there were at present 10,000 persons out of employment in Manchester and its neighbourhood. Disease, crime, and misery, were the natural result of this unfortunate state of things; and, *unless something were done to relieve the distress of the people*, he knew not what might be the consequence.'

"Mr. Hume observed, that 'something must be done to relieve the distress of the people, for there never was a time when the distress of the people existed to such a degree as it did at present.' If the House would take his advice as to the corn-laws, *our labourers would no longer have to lie down and die under the influence of disease and starvation.*'

"Mr. Villiers read communications from Preston, Bolton, Blackburn, Oldham, Nottingham, and other manufacturing towns, in order to show 'that *pauperism of the worst kind was everywhere fearfully on the increase*, and that things from which even swine would turn away in disgust, were eagerly seized upon by multitudes of the working classes, and used by them as food.'

"Mr. T. Duncombe read passages from a memorial of the Legislative Assembly of Jamaica, in which that body described the prosperous state of the emancipated negro population, and felicitated themselves, that among them 'there was no instance known of parents putting their infants to death to save them from the horrors of protracted starvation,' and 'no Poor-Laws existed *to imprison, under pretence of maintaining, the poor*,'—declaring his conviction, that the picture was a just one, both of Jamaica and of this country.'—*Times*, May 24, 1841.

"APPALLING DISTRESS IN MANCHESTER.—An inquiry has lately been instituted by the mayor into the condition of the people in one part of this town, (No. 1 district,) and the result has been laid before a meeting of the principal inhabitants—whence it appears that 911 families, consisting of 4,091 persons, were visited, whose average weekly earnings were *thirteen-pence farthing* a-week per head. In the possession of these families 9,829 pawnbrokers' tickets were found. A clergyman, present at the meeting, stated, that in going the rounds of his neighbourhood he found every family he visited in possession of pawn-tickets except one, and that one had *literally nothing which it could pawn*. Another gentleman had visited an old widow, upwards of 70 years of age, who showed him 34 tickets, having pawned, one by one, almost every article of dress and furniture belonging to her. There are hundreds of families in Manchester who, having thus disposed of their beds, are now lying upon shavings. A great portion of these miserable objects have no legal claim to parish relief in this

borough, being Irish, or emigrants from the agricultural districts, and the great majority of whom would submit to slow starvation rather than be passed home. In fact, we have well authenticated cases of ACTUAL DEATH from *famine*! A few days ago, a wretched man stumbled against a door under the weight of his tools, as he was proceeding in quest of work, and died (as was afterwards proved), from the want of the necessaries of life. Another case has been reported to us by the person in whose house it took place. A poor woman staggered into a grocer's shop, and fell exhausted upon the floor. She was carried into the kitchen, and her ghastly form laid before the fire; but, despite every care that humanity could devise, she died of what the surgeon hesitated not to pronounce STARVATION. Can these things happen in a country called civilized without betokening dangers to the rich and the powerful, who have the powers of legislation in their hands? We have seen with admiration the patience and long-suffering of the poor of this district; but let not our rulers forget, that no law was ever yet strong enough to control a starving community."—*Anti-Corn-Law Circular*, Feb., 1840.

"He (Mr. Wakley) had some acquaintance with the condition of the poor; he was familiar with their miserable huts and horrid hovels; and he would tell the rich, that in thousands of instances their Christian brethren had not as much accommodation as their dogs in their kennels. Many years ago, when he was in practice as a medical man, he had become aware of this; and he had, over and over, found, that in cases of sickness, when some little luxury was wanted, not a thing would then be at hand, cold water or dry bread being the only thing which a sick Christian could be afforded. But the House was told, by the political economists, to press on this law: it would raise wages. (Hear, hear.) Well, they cheered this on that (the Opposition) side of the House, did they? But had the law raised wages in the course of the last six years in which it had been in operation? (Cries of 'Hear, hear,' from the Ministerial benches.) Well, then, there was a difference of opinion in the House on this point. But on passing this measure they had told the working people that it was to raise wages. Were wages raised? His belief was, that they were not. (Hear, hear.) He had had accounts of the rates of wages from various parts of England, and he thought

they were not. He knew of one parish in Devonshire in which wages were now at 7s. or 8s. a-week. Did hon. members wish this to continue? Did they wish that the agricultural labourers should combine against their employers? Did they wish that when the mowing season began this should be a specimen of a conversation between a master and a labouring man:—'Very fine weather now, John; I think of starting with the mowing to-morrow; I think we could not do better.' 'Why, yes,' says John, 'it is very fine weather, and the grass is quite ripe; but, Sir, we cannot start with the mowing unless you agree to give 7s. the acre. We have got a little sort of thing of a combination like, such as they have in London; and we have just saved up a little bit against such a time as this to go on with, and we must have 7s. the acre. Parliament tells us to save, and that not to save is a crime, and so we have done so.' Well, in a short time, in two or three weeks, the grass would be spoiled; so the grass is cut at the wages asked, and that difficulty is over. But, by-the-by, the peas, the barley, and the oats, would come on to be harvested, and just the same thing might, perhaps, come over again. Was it the desire of English gentlemen to force men into these combinations, and destroy every kindly feeling between the employer and the employed? If such was not their desire, then, he must say that the course which they were pursuing was most extraordinary. It would necessarily produce this effect,—it was of no use to disguise the fact,—it would convince the working population—and they were already convinced—that it was the object of Parliament to deprive them of any relief, either in or out of the workhouse. If this was not their object, to what did the existing arrangements tend?"—*House of Commons*, February 8, 1841.

"We perceive from *Burn's Commercial Glance*, that in the first nine months of 1839, there has been a decrease of 317,796 bags, or about 25 per cent., in our imports of raw cotton, as compared with the first nine months of 1838. Now as the stock of raw cotton on hand at present is only about 60,000 bags less than it was last year at this time, it is clear that our consumption of cotton during the first nine months of 1839, must have been very little short of 20 per cent. less than it was during the same period of 1838. Taking these facts into account, then, let us see how the falling off in the



amount of wages paid would be. In 1832 our annual consumption of cotton, according to Macculloch, was 891,574 bags. The total amount of wages paid to the various classes of operatives—including spinners, weavers, bleachers, engineers, machine makers, masons, smiths, joiners, &c.—at that time was estimated by him at £21,000,000 annually. But the quantity of cotton wool entered for home consumption last year was 460,756,023; while in 1832 it was only 260,000,000, according to Macculloch. So that we shall be considerably under the mark if we estimate the wages paid to the various classes of operatives employed in the cotton manufacture last year at £32,000,000. Comparing the amount of wages paid in the first nine months of 1838 and 1839, the difference will then be as follows:—

1838 .....	£24,000,000
1839 (20 per cent. less).	19,200,000

Here we have a falling off in the purchasing power of the operatives employed in this branch of manufactures alone to the enormous extent of £4,800,000 in nine months. But the number of mills on short time, or entirely stopped, is much greater now than it was during any part of those nine months; so that if we bring up the account to the end of the year, it will exhibit the following result as compared with the previous twelve months:—

1838 .....	£32,000,000
1839 (20 per cent less).	25,600,000

A reduction of £6,400,000 in the amount of wages paid to one portion of the labouring classes! Of this large sum, which our industrious operatives have been prevented from earning by our mischievous laws, nearly £5,000,000 would have gone into the pockets of the people of Lancashire. What wonder, then, that the population of this country are starving. If the greater number of them have little more than can supply them with a sufficiency of the first necessities of life, even when in full employment, what a wretched condition must they be in now, when their wages have been diminished to the extent of about £4 per head for the whole population of the county, man, woman, child!"

—*Bolton Free Press.*

“Persons reading newspaper paragraphs may form some vague idea of the poverty existing among the mass of the labouring people, but to arrive at any adequate conception they must visit from door to door,

inquire the amount of earnings, see their food, inspect their bedding, and enter into free conversation with them as to all their affairs.

“To give a full detail of the poverty of the people, would occupy, instead of a short article, a whole *Circular*, so that I shall content myself with giving a few leading features in this picture of misery.

“First, as it respects bedding. When they lie seven in a bed, three or four lie at the top, and the youngest children lie across at the feet. In cases where there are no beds, the people have straw, and shake it up as they would do for a horse, and cover it with a wrapper. The straw or shavings have sometimes been so dirty that I have often heard the visitors observe, ‘It is not fit for a pig to sleep on.’ Unless you saw their bed-rooms you can furnish no idea of their emptiness and misery. No chairs, tables, glasses, or any of the common conveniences of a bed room. And owing to so many families crowding together in one house to save rent, the sleeping is often in violation of all decency. I should say, upon a moderate estimate, that we have in Preston, more than 2,000 families who have not a single blanket, and I believe the poor are not in a worse condition in Preston than in Chorley, Wigan, Blackburn, Bolton, and the other manufacturing towns.

“Then, as to *furniture*. I can easily say what they have *not*, but can scarcely attempt to describe what they have, which is worth naming. Two or three chairs with wood or rope bottoms, or no bottoms at all, an old table—in some instances I have seen a tea-chest or a flour-barrel as a substitute—a pan, two mugs, and a few pots are all you see; and I think I should be within the truth if I said, that we have three thousand families, the whole of the household furniture of each (with the exception of the bedding just given,) would not sell upon an average for twenty shillings.

“As to *medicine*,—and I am sorry to say it is often wanted—it is uniformly all procured at the Dispensary.

“What kind of a father would he be who would only allow his children two meals a-day instead of four, and would see them ready to fight each other for the mere crumbs, while the pantry shelves were laden with food, spoiling for want of being used? At the taxation price of bread, how is it possible for such as our weavers to live? Take, for instance, a case, and not an extreme one, which resembles hundreds of others.

J. H.'s earnings . . . . .	7s.	0d.	}	8s.	6d.
Wife's do. . . . .	1s.	6d.			
Rent, Looms, and out- goings . . . . .	2s.	0d.	}	3s.	7d.
Fire in winter . . . . .	0s.	10d.			
Candles and soap . . . .	0s.	9d.			
			<hr/>		
			4s 11d.		

"Four and elevenpence for a man, wife, and three children! being scarcely a shilling a-head for food, leaving not a farthing for the numerous necessary wants of the family."—*Preston Correspondent to the "Anti-Corn Law Circular,"* Feb. 1834.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

"Sir,—Two worthy Suffolk Conservatives have recently made me acquainted with the following case:—

"A good farming labourer at Yoxford has a wife and five children, whereof the family flour-bill alone for the week amounts to 13s. which one of the county members admits to be consistent with the usually calculated rations, whilst the highest wages are but 12s. Now, here is a deficiency even of dry bread for a hard-working Englishman, who has the misfortune to have five children; and what he did in the winter, and what he must yet do, even with the warm weather before him, in these dear times, for other necessities, is equally problematical and deplorable, except by what is falsely called charity.

"I am yet more puzzled to make out how, except by half-starving, our poor Devonshire labourers exist; since the wages there, unquestionably, do not average beyond 8s. per week, and the difference in the price of bread corn can hardly be 33 per cent. in their favour. Do the foregoing rates of wages in either instance, Sir, offer the due proportion between labour and the remuneration for it that was held forth by the advocates of the New Poor-Laws?

"The statesmen who planned that measure must surely have designed to raise up the defunct character of our once 'bold peasantry' thereby. So sure as they and the majority in Parliament confine themselves therein to the keeping up of their rents, and the constructing Union workhouses, suffer who may, so early will they arrive at the halfway-house towards the end. I look upon the law itself as the beginning.

"I have the honour to be, &c.,

"A FREEMAN OF EXETER.

"May 18, 1839."

[From the *Anti-Corn-Law Circular*, Oct. 15, 1839.]

"REPORT ON THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION OF THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX.

"POPULATION, AREA, &c.—The present population of this county is a trifle under 300,000 souls.

"The number of statute acres, exclusive of the roads, rivers, and canals, is estimated at 903,000, namely, 110,000 of waste, and 793,000 of productive land. Of the soil under cultivation, there are supposed to be about 10,000 statute acres of hop-grounds, being nearly a fifth of the soil devoted to that peculiar description of agricultural produce in the United Kingdom.

"The farmers of Sussex have long accustomed themselves to the estimate, that every forty acres of land under cultivation (arable and pasture), should provide full employment for an adult husbandman; a calculation which enables us to assume the number of adult labourers employed in agricultural pursuits in this county, at (in round numbers) 20,000.

"WAGES OF THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS.—The condition of farm labourers in this county is a degree less pitiable than that of the serfs of Devonshire. In no one parish which I have visited do the regular wages average more than 10s. a-week. It is the custom in Sussex to make a broad distinction between the married and the single husbandman; to pay the former higher wages than the latter; to get husbandry work done at a price relatively, not to the value of the labour, but to the exigency of the labourer. And this practice may be said to prevail, more or less, throughout the agricultural districts of the kingdom. A labourer is paid wages in proportion to his imprudence, rather than with reference to his industry and skill.

"In the counties of Devon and Cornwall, the remuneration of the labour of the husbandman is low, yet there this principle is unknown. Even in Devonshire, the husbandman who can do a day's work is paid what is called a day's wages for that work, whether he be single or married. The effect of the practice complained of must be either to drive the bachelor husbandmen from their native land, in sheer disgust at the gross injustice with which they had been treated, or to prompt them to early and imprudent marriage, in relief from that heavy discount upon their industry, to which, as bache-



lors, they must have been most unwisely subjected. In the one case, the farmers lose their best men; in the other, they make premature provision for a pauper population!

"It is now about nine years since Swing originated Chartism in Kent, and illuminated the northern boundary of this county with his torch. The wages then given in Sussex were 10s. and 8s.; the former to married, the latter to single husbandmen. Wheat was then at a comparatively reasonable price, and intimidation extorted from the farmers a general admission that a week's labour was worth the wages of 12s. Wages were then raised to that amount for the period of the duration of the fear which Swing-fires had excited, and no longer.

"The following anecdote may serve for an illustration:—

"The manorial estate of Cowdray (at Eastbourn, near Midhurst), is the property of W. S. Pointz, Esq. By the agency of that gentleman's then steward (Mr. Cameron), the farmers of that estate, and of the surrounding districts, were induced to make terms with the people by a promise, that the wages should be increased to 12s.; and Mr. Pointz, specifically to enable his tenants to redeem their pledge without personal inconvenience to themselves, voluntarily reduced his rents. These tenants paid the wages of 12s., thus agreed upon, and thus compensated to them for a short time only, when the labourer's remuneration again fell back to its natural level, and Mr. Pointz raised his rents by one half the amount of the original reduction; and now, within a few days, that gentleman has given his tenants to understand, that because they have not paid the wages agreed upon, their rents must henceforth stand at the sum paid by them anterior to the threatened visit of that predial Chartist, Captain Swing."

"There is a tract of good farm land running along the north side of the South Downs, and which may be estimated at twelve miles in length, by two in breadth. It comprises nearly the entire of the parishes of Sutton, Bignor, Duncton, Graffam, Weyshot, Cocking, Bepton, Linch, Greygord, Didding, Elsted, South Harting, and West Harting. The wages throughout this district of the county do not average more than 8s. 6d. In the north-west district of Sussex, Mr. Jenner, the tenant of the Cowdray-park farm, gives the nominal wages of 12s. to his married labourers. Even Mr. Jenner,

who is to be regarded as, in some measure, the *locum tenens* of Mr. Pointz in the district to which we are directing attention, pays his able-bodied unmarried labourers only the average of 9s. per week. Between this and the 12s. wages of his married husbandmen, we get, as the average of the value of labour in this purely agricultural district, 10s. 6d., or the medium of the two wages of 12s. and 9s. In the eastern division of the county, instances of the 12s. wages are more numerous than in the central, or western districts, for there the demand for the labour of the husbandman is less regular, and less legitimate, by reason of the hop cultivation of some ten thousand acres, and of its proximity to the vast hop grounds of the adjoining district of South Kent. Yet, even in East and Central Sussex, the wages of the agricultural labourer do not exceed an average of 10s., whilst those obtaining the maximum of 12s. live on a much less nutritious diet than the operatives of our commercial and manufacturing population.

"In another point of view, the insufficiency of the maximum wages of the married agricultural labourer in Sussex will be more immediately obvious. His wages, after paying the rent of his cottage (which is under-stated), is 10s. 6d.; with this money he has to maintain five human beings for a week, *i. e.* with a trifle less than 2s. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per head. The cost of food for a week of each pauper in the workhouse is 2s. 4d.; very many of such pauper inmates are young children, whilst but few among them are hale men; their diet is regulated by the Commissioners; the food is purchased wholesale, and by contract; and the expense of feeding them, under such circumstances, is 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per head per week more than the independent labourer is able to earn as a provision for feeding and clothing himself, his wife, and little ones!"

"A correspondent from the neighbourhood of Abergavenny writes us word, that the state of the still labouring poor in that part of the country is likely to be very distressing during the winter—wages being only 9s. a-week, whilst flour is 14s. per bushel."—*Hereford Press*, Dec. 22, 1838.

"At Adpar, Cardiganshire, labourers' wages are low, being from 4s. 6d. to 6s. per week in summer; the labourers finding their own food."—*Parliamentary Gazetteer*, 1840.

"The labourer is worthy of his hire."—Luke x. 7.

"Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; *that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.*"—Jer. xxii. 13.

"He that taketh away his neighbour's living, slayeth him: and he that defraudeth *the labourer of his hire*, is a blood-shedder."—Eccles. xxiv. 22.

"And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against those that oppress *the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right.*"—Mal. iii. 5.

"Let not the *wages of any man which hath wrought for thee, tarry with thee*, but give it out of hand: if thou serve God, he will also repay thee."—Tob. iv. 14.

"The character of Englishmen is made up by the circumstances by which they are surrounded. If those circumstances are constant employment, with wages sufficient to obtain enough of the necessities of life for themselves and families, they are contented and happy in their homes, and faithful and diligent servants. There is no gainsaying this truth; all history proves this fact. Now it is notorious that, for many years prior to the passing of the 'Poor-Law Amendment-Act,' the very best wages given to agricultural and other labourers, were altogether inadequate to their wants, the price of provisions rising, and the wages becoming lower and lower; and hence the great increase of the poor-rates.

"The making the labourer partly dependent on the poor-rate for his scanty wages, was a system introduced by the employers, to which the labourer was forced to submit. A law to punish those employers was indeed required—not one to give those men a power to inflict on their labourers a still greater oppression and degradation, such as the 'Poor-Law Amendment-Act' is. My lord, under all the circumstances, that Act may be justly designated a '*diabolical*' law.

"Under that law, full scope is given for the very worst oppression; under the working of that law, these very employers are enabled to withhold entirely that quota of wages heretofore supplied from the rates! This is done in thousands of instances! But then, that Act was, you say, intended to raise the character of the labouring population—to make them more *provident*, and stimulate them to lay by for a 'rainy day.' Gracious heavens! to talk of stimulating *those* to lay by for a 'rainy day,' whose invention was ever on the rack as to how they were to obtain food enough to keep body and soul together, is monstrous! It is villainous in the extreme!

"My lord, allow me to ask, did your

lordship ever recommend the application of this principle to *ex-Lord Chancellors*, or other state paupers? Was it the dread of becoming a 'Westmoreland pauper' that induced your lordship to look out for a 'rainy day,' not on the principle laid down for the guidance of the labourer and the artisan, but by proposing an increased retiring pension for Lord Chancellors, for two or three years' services, of £5,000 a-year? Was it by robbing the poor of their patrimony, your lordship hoped to prove your title to the increase you *modestly* proposed for yourself.

"These are questions you may evade answering; but, my lord, be assured, that the nation will answer them for you, some day, with a vengeance! But then the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, besides causing the poor to lay by for a 'rainy day'—as though they know any other than 'rainy' days—was to *raise* wages also! The sequel has already proved the falsehood of that assertion. It tends, directly, to *lower* wages, as I will prove. A labouring man is out of work: he goes in search of employment; one offers him work at *eight* shillings a-week (and mind, my lord, this sum is above the average in many counties, Wilts particularly. I mention this to show that I am not going to extremes in naming *eight* shillings; thousands, notwithstanding the Poor-Law has been in operation four or five years, work for eight shillings a-week). Well, my lord, the man has a moderate family—say five children; seeing that poverty and wretchedness must be his portion, with eight shillings a-week for *seven* persons, he refuses to work for that sum. He goes further—but, as is generally the case, my lord, those who give the lowest wages are the only persons wanting hands—as a last resort, he applies to the parish for relief. And now comes the proof of the efficacy (?) of the New Poor-Law in 'raising wages.'



"He applies to the 'Relieving Officer,' (who, in general, is anything *but* a 'Relieving' Officer); he refers him to the 'Board of Guardians,' of which my Lord Cruelty is Chairman, who has been elected to that office from his known antipathy to, and hatred of, the poor, and of any poor-laws. It is, my lord, beyond dispute, that, with a 'Board' *determined* to carry out the principles (intended and *understood*) of the New Poor-Law, such a man would be preferred to that office in preference to any other. And indeed, my lord, this is quite necessary, as no *humane* man would, or could carry its infernal designs into effect. The man attends the 'Board;' the usual questions are put and answered, and it is discovered that he is an *able-bodied* labourer, and that he has refused to work at Farmer Kill'em-and-Eat'em's, who happened to be one of the 'Board,' at *eight* shillings! This latter fact establishes at once in the minds of the Board, the conviction that the man is not *entitled* to relief; and, indeed, they begin to talk of the propriety of sending such a *rascal* to the 'treadmill' for a month, when the Chairman, who being a 'bit of a lawyer,' rings the bell, and Mr. Bumbell, the beadle, is ordered to show that *villain* (the labourer) the door; and then my Lord Cruelty tells the *gentlemen* of the pleasure it would have afforded him, to have met their wishes in sending the *villain* to the 'treadmill,' but that, as Guardians, they had not power to do so, which he very much regretted; and at which they all wonder much at the oversight of the legislature, in not having introduced a clause to that effect!

"Well, my lord, be pleased to go with me into the street, and we shall see the man, with his wife and children, who had been waiting for him, of course, quite resigned to his fate, that of eking out a miserable existence upon *eight* shillings a-week, praying to God to forgive him his sin, of having refused to avail himself of the *kind* offer of Farmer 'Kill'em-and-Eat'em,' and blessing God that he is an *Englishman*, privileged to live in this *free* and *happy* country, where *rich* and *poor* are *alike* protected by 'wise and good' laws!

"But it might be otherwise, my lord. We find him breathing curses, 'loud and deep,' against the hard-hearted wretches who had just proved themselves dead to every kind of sympathy, and hardened against every principle of justice and humanity!

"Being by this time driven to despair, the man resolves (not having read the clauses of the New Poor-Law,) to appeal to the justices. He accordingly repairs to the Sessions' room, and he is almost petrified at beholding my Lord *Cruelty* head and chief here also; at the sight of whom the poor man seems disposed to give up all for lost. But hunger, my lord, is a 'sharp thorn;' and he proceeds to crave for justice in behalf of himself and family, but with no better success than when before the 'Guardians' the day previous. Indeed, my Lord *Cruelty*, after having poured forth a plentiful share of magisterial abuse on the poor fellow for *daring* to refuse to work for *eight* shillings a-week, has seized a pen for the purpose (by the way of gratifying the Guardians) of making an order for committing him as a 'rogue and vagabond' to the treadmill, for a month. But just at this moment, another justice (Sir *Christian Meekness*) arrives, and my Lord *Cruelty* seems a little abashed. Sir *Christian* inquires into the business, and condescends to explain the *law* of the case to the poor labourer; tells him that they have no power to order relief to persons of *his* class, their power only extending to persons known to them (the justices) personally, to be incapacitated for further labour! Sir *Christian* regrets that he can render him no assistance, and recommends him to go to work for the *eight* shillings a-week, until something better 'turns up!' And thus we find our *British* labourer at liberty to die of starvation, or to work for wages that would keep both himself and family within a hair's breadth of it!

"The chances being that if he goes to Farmer 'Kill'em-and-Eat'em,' to accept of his offer of *eight* shillings a-week, the latter has grown bold, by the countenance of my Lord *Cruelty*, and *now* offers but *seven* shillings! or, if perchance he gives the *eight*, as first offered, takes great pains to impress upon the mind of the labourer the very great act of *charity* he is performing by so doing! This system has, in some places, reduced the labourer's wages to four or five shillings a-week!

"Can your lordship say that this is not a faithful picture? This shows the efficacy of the New Poor-Law, on both points, namely, that of *raising* the 'character' and the 'wages' of the labourers of England!

"Another species of oppression is now being pretty generally practised upon the labourer, by making him contribute to-

wards the relief of the poor. Justices are not 'found wanting' to carry this plan into operation, as every Petty and Quarter Sessions abundantly testifies; the object being, *to make the poor keep the poor!* Labourers with nine or ten shillings a-week made to pay poor-rates, and expected to 'lay by' for a 'rainy' day, notwithstanding! But your lordship would not believe, 'without proof,' that it did not 'tend to raise the character, as well as to increase the comforts of the poor.'—*Anti-Malthusian Bloodsucker's Letter to Lord Brougham*, Sept., 1840.

"Had it not been urged, that the new law would benefit the poor by increasing the rate of wages? Indeed, Lord Brougham had declared, that but for his anticipation that this would be its effect, he would not support it; but it was due to his Lordship to add, that he had recently declared that in this respect the Act had miserably failed. In corroboration of this assertion, he need only refer to the thirty or forty men who were now at work in the public walks at the rate of 1s. a-day—a circumstance, he believed, quite unprecedented in this town."—*A Speaker at the Barnstaple Meeting*, March 1, 1841.

"Would any one assert, that distress of the most poignant character did not frequently exist amongst the agricultural labourers? And how could it be otherwise? No man could affirm, that the average wages of a labourer, with a wife and four children, exceeded 10s. a-week, which was little more than a shilling a-day. He (Mr. Harvey) would assert, that wages were much lower in many parts of England. He would instance, from personal knowledge, the county of Essex, as affording a very sufficient example. It could not, however, be asserted, that the average amount of agricultural labourers' wages exceeded 10s. per week. Why, a learned and noble individual, who had lately left this world, having thought fit to leave a legacy for the maintenance of a favourite dog, left almost as large a sum for the support of a mere brute. It was his (Mr. Harvey's) conviction, that some efficient measures must be adopted for raising the rate of wages. He had often before observed, that the Poor-Law Act, and the Corn-Law Act could not coexist in this country. According to the existing system, they depreciated the value of agricultural labour when converted into corn—the only mode which was left at the labourer's disposal. The necessary

consequence of that system was to raise the price of bread; and how, he would ask, could a labourer, situated as he had before described, with a wife and four children, support them at all adequately upon 10s. a-week? It had been his fortune to attend before a Committee of the House, before which a labourer was produced as a witness, whose tottering condition, the consequence of deficient food, had rendered it necessary to provide him with a chair while giving his evidence. The wages of this poor man were no more than 8s., and out of this miserable sum he was obliged to support a wife and several children. It was only at rare intervals that the wife had it in her power to indulge in her favourite beverage of tea; and the sunance of the whole family was of the most meagre description. This was but one instance out of the many. By existing laws the poor man was stripped of 4s. out of every 10s. If the appeals of the friends of the working classes in that House were unheeded, the attention of the working community out of the House would be strenuously and strongly directed towards the subject. And then they would speak with a voice of power and moral energy, for which some hon. members might, perhaps, wish to see substituted turbulent opposition and insurrectionary movements. This was a course into which they were too wise to be entrapped. While they perfectly knew their strength, they had the sagacity to exert it with propriety."—*Mr. D. W. Harvey, House of Commons*, Feb. 20, 1838.

"But to come to the plain and simple fact, one great hardship on which the opponents of the new law dwelt was simply this:—a man, without any fault of his own, might be reduced, for a time, to want relief, but however well conducted he might have been, however respectable in character, or illustrious in talent, in his past life, he would be neglected, and no relief would be afforded to him unless he was sick, or infirm, or aged. Such a person would be met by a stern refusal of relief out of the workhouse. This regulation, in many cases had been severely felt; and, speaking as one not anxious to throw any unjust imputation on the new law, and desirous to see that law, as it was intended, a benefit to the country, he earnestly hoped, that the strings of restriction might not be drawn too tight, but that inquiry might be made, and upon the information derived from that investi-



gation, instead of going back to the old law, these restrictions of the new law might not be pulled too tight, and that, in cases where a man was proved to be in need and deserving of support, he might receive it under his own roof, and not be subjected to separation from his wife and family in a New Poor-Law workhouse. That was a tangible complaint against the law, and one of the main grievances which was loudly spoken of by the opponents of the bill; indeed, it had been admitted by Mr. Gulson, in the report of the Poor-Law Commissioners. The moment a man sought for parochial relief, though he might be out of employment, and have become distressed from causes over which he could have no control, it seemed to be assumed, that he came to the Board of Guardians of his parish only to impose upon them; for the workhouse was proposed as the test of his destitution and sincerity. He (Mr. Liddell) must say, that, in his limited experience, he had not thus understood the people of England. In that part of the country to which he belonged, every man who was able to work was also anxious to obtain work. They were influenced by that good old English feeling which led them to strive to the utmost, and to make any sacrifice, even of life almost, rather than ask parochial relief. (Hear.) He did believe, that in many other parts of England the feelings of the people were not so debased as to lead them to seize every opportunity of imposing on the Guardians for the sake of getting a miserable pittance. (Hear.) Those who would take the trouble to inquire, would find that in almost every case want, and want only, led such persons as those which he had mentioned to apply for relief, and he trusted that their feelings would not be outraged, and charity poisoned at its source, by their being pointed to the workhouse as the only medium through which assistance was to be obtained. The noble lord had referred to the abuses under the old law, with respect to imposition and the manner in which the labour of the pauper was disposed of by auction. Admitting this to have been the case in the southern and midland counties, he must say that he would rather have his labour sold by auction, than have the workhouse allowance pointed to him as the only means by which he could receive relief, being an able-bodied labourer; for bad as the first evil was, he considered the latter to be one of

much greater magnitude. (Hear.) It was also said, that this workhouse principle of relief would induce a desire to work and get good wages, and also a habit of saving something against the day of distress among those who were fortunate enough to obtain work and good wages, and thus a spirit of economy would be infused into the labouring population, and tend to their great improvement. He trusted that this idea would be realized. A very ingenious pamphlet had been put into the hands of the members of that House, showing, that, from the rate of wages in many parts of the country, it was possible for labourers to lay up savings, while it was impossible in others. But while he admitted the possibility of the labouring classes being able to save something, and would most earnestly impress on them the advantage of cultivating habits of frugality and economy, in order that they might be in some measure prepared for the day of distress, he would remind the House, that mankind were not in a state of perfection, and that there were feelings and habits among the lower orders, which it was difficult to restrain; and that if they did not lay up all they might save, to guard against unforeseen distress, the House should consider how many persons there were in the higher ranks of life whose education, intelligence, and means might warrant the expectation of better things, but who did not know how to keep their expenditure within their income. (Hear.) If such, then, was the case, they ought to look with some degree of tenderness on the conduct of the humbler classes in this respect, though they did spend a little more than was prudent in present gratification instead of laying up their savings for a time of need. (Hear.)"—*Mr. Liddell, Ibid.*

"What, then, were the objects of it as put forth by their own Commissioners? They told us, that the object of the act was, in the first place, 'to raise the wages of the labouring man;' and in the next, 'to make the labouring man more moral.' One anecdote would convince the meeting, that it must either have grievously failed, or that the Commissioners had put forth the grossest delusion in the proposition, that the act was likely to raise the wages of the labouring man. There lived at Bolton, not many miles from Manchester, Mr. Ashworth, a large manufacturer. That gentleman, before the act had passed, before the bill had gone through the House, wrote a letter to Mr.

Chadwick, secretary to the Poor-Law Commissioners, which he addressed, 'Respected friend Chadwick,' in which he said he was extremely happy to see this judicious Act about to be passed. And for what reason was he so glad that it was about to become law? (Hear, hear.) Because, he said, it would immediately bring agricultural labourers down into the north, where labourers were wanted, for the purpose of equalising wages! (Hear, hear.) Could the meeting suppose that Mr. Ashworth meant, that labourers coming from the south to the north would raise wages in the north? (Hear, hear.) No; but he went on and said, 'for labourers are much wanted, and the wages of the hand-loom weavers have been raised ten per cent. lately.' (Hear, hear.) This was in 1834, and on turning to the date of the letter and to the date of the appointment of the hand-loom weavers' committee, he (Mr. Cobbett) found that Mr. Ashworth's letter was written very nearly on the same day when evidence was brought before that committee of which Mr. Fielden was a member, that the people of Bolton were in the greatest possible distress, that they had scarcely any furniture, that they were unable to renew their clothes, and that their wages were not much more than 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per day individually! (Hear.) It was a very nice calculation to ascertain what the rise of ten per cent on 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per day was! Mr. Ashworth was a very expert calculator—he was a Quaker—and so he found out there was a rise of exactly ten per cent. What that came to on 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a-day he (Mr. Cobbett) left the meeting to ascertain, for he could not. [Mr. Fielden: A farthing and one-tenth.] Mr. Fielden said this rise was one farthing and one-tenth of a farthing! (Hear, hear.) From this one anecdote he left the meeting to guess whether the men of St. Stephen's, when they managed to pass this Poor-Law Act, which had such a particular friend in Mr. Ashworth, believed its operation upon the country would raise the wages of the labouring man. Mr. Fielden had proved that here they had not been raised; and in the agricultural counties he (Mr. Cobbett) knew, that so far from wages having been raised, they had been materially lessened—(hear, hear)—in many instances as much as twenty per cent."—*Manchester Fielden Dinner*, June 4, 1838.

"Upon one occasion when he was present, a labourer was under examination, which ran somewhat thus:—The witness

was asked how much his wages were under the old system of poor-laws; he replied 8s. a-week. How many children had he, and had he a wife? Yes, he had a wife and six children; and, in addition to those six, it so chanced that his wife had had an illegitimate child before her marriage, so that in point of fact he had seven children to support. Well, but he was receiving 1s. 6d. a-week from the gentleman who was the father of the child, thereby increasing the labourer's weekly pittance to 9s. 6d., and then he stated that he had 1s. 6d. each allowed by the parish for two of his children, on account of their ages; so that, taken altogether, he had 12s. 6d. a-week to provide for himself, a wife, and seven children. Now that was before the New Poor-Law had been brought into operation. Well, but then, said the chairman, in his own peculiar manner, and a most peculiar manner it was, 'Pray what wages have you received since the New Poor-Law has been brought into action?' '9s. a-week' was the answer. 'So,' continued the chairman, 'in fact, you get 1s. a-week more wages under the new than you did under the old act?' 'Yes,' said the man, 'I do, Sir.' Well, seeing the false impression the effect of this examination was calculated to produce, he (Mr. Murphy) sent up a note to an hon. member, one of his own party, requesting that the witness might be asked whether since the new act he had been in the habit of receiving the 1s. 6d. a-week from the father of the illegitimate child? The question was put, and the reply was in the negative. It then turned out that the allowance from the parish of 3s. a-week for the other two children had been likewise withdrawn—showing, therefore, that if the wages had nominally increased 1s., yet that in point of fact the man was receiving 3s. 6d. a-week less. (Hear, hear.) But the New Poor-Law was said to have increased wages. That, however, was to be seen. He knew it in reality to have had a different effect. Now, he did not know whether this examination appeared in the minutes of the evidence published by the Committee; whether it did or not, it was perfectly fresh in his own recollection. The witness was next asked as to the quantity of bread his family consumed in the week under the old law, and he said seven gallons, and that the cost was then 10d. per gallon. 'And how much do you now consume, and what price is it?' The labourer re-



plied, that his consumption, in point of quantity, was the same, but that he now was obliged to pay 14d. instead of 10d. per gallon. 'Then,' said the hon. member, 'your wages are not so good, they are not so advantageous for your necessities now, inasmuch as when you received 8s. a-week you paid no more than 10d. a-gallon for bread; whilst, since the passing of the new law, your wages have been 9s., and you have been compelled to pay 14d. per gallon for your bread—in fact, in that particular alone, you are 2s. 4d. a-week worse since the new law came into operation than before it was passed?' 'Yes,' said the poor fellow. ('Hear, hear,' and 'Shame!') Now, it was manifestly clear that the man's wages, in as far as his comforts, his necessities, were affected, were very much otherwise than being better; but Mr. Fazakerley, the Chairman of the Committee, had been, as he had already shown, endeavouring to leave the evidence to the Committee, so as to create an impression favourable to the effect of the operation of the new law upon the circumstances of the witness."—*Mr. Murphy, Freemasons' Tavern*, Feb. 19, 1838.

"Now, he would appeal to every gentleman in the House who was connected with the industrious classes, engaged either in manufactures or in agricultural occupations, to stand up in his place and say, whether he believed that they were receiving wages equal to those which they obtained anterior to the period when this Bill passed. Nothing could be more at variance with the statements made before the Committee. It was established by hosts of witnesses, farmers and others, that before the Bill came into operation, persons who were receiving 8s. or 9s. a-week, at the same time received from the parish corn or meal, according to the number of their families, to the amount of from 5s. to 10s. a-week; and that since the passing of that law, an able-bodied man was not receiving more than 8s. or 10s. a-week, while he was entirely excluded from all parochial aid. Could the noble lord conceive it possible, after £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 had been abstracted from the funds formerly applied to the support of the poor, that this diminution of means could have no material influence on their comforts and condition?"—*Mr. D. W. Harvey, House of Commons*, Feb. 20, 1838.

"Now, whatever were the evils under which the country was labouring when

this Act was introduced, to coerce the people because they were poor, was certainly not the way to abate the grievances then complained of. (Cheers.) It would have been well if, before the Bill passed, the advice of his late colleague had been taken; if an inquiry had been instituted, as his late friend desired, into the causes of the poverty of the people, and the increase of the poor-rates, it would have led, he was persuaded, to a very different measure than that of which they now sought the repeal. The causes of poverty might be very shortly stated. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it was well known, it was on record, what were the prices of labour; and Mr. Davies, a clergyman of Berkshire, in 1795, took great pains to ascertain the point; and in a work which he published, he proved, from indisputable authorities, that the common labourer in the country, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, could obtain for between 21 and 22 days' labour, a quarter of wheat; but what could a labouring man obtain for 22 days' labour during the twenty years immediately preceding the passing of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act? From 1815 to 1834, when the Poor-Law Amendment-Act was passed, the quarter of wheat had been 63s., and the wages of a common day-labourer, on the farms throughout England, he was quite certain, would not amount to more than 9s. a-week; so that, from the simplest calculation, it was evident that the labouring man, instead of getting the quarter of wheat for 21 days' labour, as his forefathers did in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, got exactly only one-half. (Cheers.) If the legislature had begun its business at the right end, it should have set to work to restore to the labouring man the quarter of wheat for his 21 days' labour, instead of requiring him to work 42 days for it. (Cheers.) Had they done that, there would have been no occasion to talk about pauperism, about the people being pauperized, and the necessity of adopting means to dispauperize them; the legislature would have been spared all that trouble. But to correct the evil what sort of Act had they given? He had already stated, that it struck at the root of all local government; the great amount of the rates raised for the relief of the poor before the passing of the new law, was not so heavy, was not so much per head on the population, as the rates were now in those twenty counties where the

administration of the Poor-Laws had been carried into full effect. If there were eighteen counties in England that managed their affairs well, why not say to the other thirty-four counties, 'Take an example from the eighteen, act upon their system,' and then no alteration would have been required in the law. At any rate, there was no necessity for coercing the eighteen counties. But there were other objects to be accomplished. The rates raised for the relief of the poor were to be diverted to defray the cost of an expensive machinery (cheers); thus directly and at once robbing the poor of those rates which had been raised for their support. (Cheers.) Such had been the effect. A diminution of rates, it was true, had taken place, but that diminution of rates had conferred no advantages on the poor; on the contrary, it had tended to oppress them in a manner never before known in England. (Cheers.) Nor had it at all benefited the rate-payers as a body. Many rate-payers, he believed, had sustained considerable loss from a diminution in their customers, arising from the fall in wages. Who, then, had the benefit? None but those fellows clothed in a little brief authority, who were sending out spies through different parts of the country, endeavouring to irritate the people, and pocketing, to a large amount, that which belonged to the poor. (Cheers.) What was the principle laid down on which they would effect this saving of the rates? It was said to be a self-acting test; it was nothing less than a prison for the pauper, the workhouse test, which was to try satisfactorily, and invariably, whether a man was deserving of relief or not, by subjecting him to the degrading necessity of entering a workhouse, most properly denominated a prison or Bastile." —*Mr. Fielden, Freemasons' Tavern, Feb. 19, 1838.*

"I have been upon the Poor-Law Committee from December to the present time, and I have been discussing with every witness the operation which this Act of Parliament has upon wages (hear), because I think that a most important feature in the case. A few females may have died in childbed for want of medical attendance; a poor old man may be starved to death for want, in consequence of the operation of the Act; but these cases are as nothing compared with its operation in lowering the wages of working men. (Hear, hear.) I have, as I

said before, been discussing this question with the witnesses before the Committee. The first witness was Mr. Gulson, and he was put forward as the cleverest of all the clever Assistants of the Commissioners at Somerset-house. I then discussed it with Mr. Howe, then with Dr. Kay, and then with Mr. Power. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Power would convince you in these parts, that you would have a far better administration, accounts better kept, less trouble, and that you would be better satisfied with your affairs under the management of the Poor-Law Commissioners, than under your own. Is there any one of you who can believe and say, that the Commissioners can manage your affairs better than you can yourselves? (Loud cries of 'No, no.') Then take care that these Commissioners do not take them out of your hands. (Hear, hear.) If I wanted any proof that these men are paid for telling untruths—for that they tell untruths I do say without hesitation, and I have no hesitation in saying that they are paid—I say, If I wanted any proof of this, the proof is already coming forward and a challenge is made. Last week I received from Leicester a petition, making a wholesale denial of Mr. Gulson's evidence—of his evidence commencing, not with me, but of his evidence in chief in answer to questions put by Mr. Fazakerley and other supporters of the Bill; and, I think, fifty-six questions follow on successively, on which the clergy, the bankers, the merchants, the manufacturers, and all the respectability of Leicester, say that Mr. Gulson's evidence is altogether untrue, and they are prepared to deny it. They state that wages in Leicester were 9s. a-week before the passing of the Bill, and that they are now reduced to 7s., but the scarcity of work is such that the earnings of the workpeople do not amount to more than 5s. a-week. (Hear, hear.) And not only this, but the petitioners are prepared to prove, that the direct tendency and operation of this law is to lower the wages of the manufacturing population of Leicester, so as to ensure an inevitable reduction of them, and this they pray to be allowed to prove at the bar of the House of Commons, or before the Poor-Law Amendment Committee." —*Mr. Fielden at his Manchester Dinner, June 4, 1838.*

"Mr. Briscoe said he was struck with one observation of the hon. member for Oldham, that there were 25,000 handloom



weavers in that district whose earnings did not exceed 4s. 6d. to 5s. per week each. Now, with such a fact before them, could they expect anything else than discontent at Bradford at the introduction of the poor-laws? If relief could be given only in the workhouse, how could that mass of beings, who must be in distress, be relieved in the workhouse? For his own part, he would be willing, either in or out of that House, to contribute to the relief of those distressed parties, but certainly not to continue them in a trade which did not afford them the means of subsistence."—*House of Commons*, Dec. 12, 1837.

"His (Mr. Fielden's) main objection to the law was founded on his firm conviction, that it would reduce the wages of the labouring people, and if he had nothing more than even the Assistant-Commissioners to satisfy him upon that point, their evidence had shown him that that had already been the result. The House should have foreseen this before it passed the law. When it affected to throw men upon their resources, it should have been certain that they had these resources; but the cruelty of this law was now becoming obvious in all times of depression of trade, and in the intervals between the different harvests in the agricultural parts of the country. This report stated, in contradiction to what was the fact, 'that the real interests of all classes of the community have been consulted in the operation of the law.' He (Mr. Fielden) was so thoroughly satisfied that this was unfounded—he had seen such strong proof that it had brought misery upon the labouring classes, that he had thought it his duty to move an amendment to this part of the report. Hon. members would perceive, that it was stated, on the authority of Mr. Overman, Vice-chairman of the Amptill Board, that the wages of the labourers in his neighbourhood had been raised since the law came into operation. Indeed, in illustration of the fact, he stated what he himself paid upon his own farm in 1834, and what he paid in 1837—that was to say, he gave them a table containing the weekly payments for every week in those years, to his labourers, and the totals showed an increase in the gross amount in the year 1837. So far, Mr. Overman made out the case very well; but in his previous examination he had stated, not only that wages had been raised, but that many more men had been employed on the land. And here Mr.

Overman had failed to establish his whole case, but had completely succeeded in establishing the point which he (Mr. F.) aimed to prove—namely, a reduction in wages. Mr. Overman, in 1834 and 1835, employed 20 men and 13 boys, and the gross amount which he stated he paid to them in the year, was £775 6s. 1d. He stated, in 1837 and 1838 his gross payment in wages was £870 8s., which was, doubtless, a considerable increase in the money spent in wages; but he employed, in the latter year, 11 boys and 26 men, which, as any one would find on calculating it, proved a reduction of 11d. per week in money wages. As Mr. Overman and his table were cited in the report as a proof of an advance in wages, he (Mr. Fielden) proposed an amendment to that part of the report, which he would read to the House. It was as follows:—"That so far from the real interests of all classes having been consulted by the administration of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, as expressed in page 25 of this report, the interests of the poor have suffered by the withdrawal of relief and reduction of wages, as appears by the evidence [15,305, 15,318, 15, 361, Ceeley; and 16,472, and 16,474, Rawson; and 14,345, 14,349, 14,353, 14, 354, 14,370, 14,479, and 14,480, Overman]. The statement of weekly wages paid for farm labour during four years, by T. W. Overman, accompanied by the list of labourers in his employment, from July, 1834, to July, 1835, and from July, 1837, to July, 1838, in the former of which years he had 20 men and 13 boys, and in the latter 26 men and 11 boys, shows the following result. In this calculation, 5s. per week only are allowed for the boys in both years, although Mr. Overman, in his evidence [14,378,] says, boys' wages had been advanced.

	£.	s.	d.
"1834 and 1835.			
"13 boys, each 52 weeks, or 676 weeks for one boy, at 5s. ....	169	0	0
"20 men, each 52 weeks, or 1,040 weeks one man, at 11s. 8d. ....	606	13	4
	£775	13	4
"Amount paid, as per Mr. Overman's statement ....	£775	6	4
"1837 and 1838.			
"11 boys, each 52 weeks, or 572 weeks for one boy, at 5s. ....	143	0	0
"26 men, each 52 weeks, or 1,352 weeks for one man, at 10s. 9d. ....	726	14	0
	£869	14	0
"Amount paid as per Mr. Overman's statement. ....	£870	4	0

"A reduction of labourers' wages in money, of from 11s. 8d. per week, in 1834-5 to 10s. 9d. per week in 1837-8, or 8 per cent., is thus shown by Mr. Overman's statement; and 11s. 8d. would buy the labourer  $129\frac{1}{2}$  pints of wheat, at the average price of wheat per quarter (40s. 2d.), during the year 1834: whereas, 10s. 9d. would purchase him only 99 pints of wheat at the average price of (55s. 9d.) during the year 1837, being a decline in his command over wheat of 25 per cent., and, taking wheat at the average price of the week ending 5th July last, his command over wheat then, as compared with 1834, is reduced  $37\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and this has been going on under the operation of the New Poor-Law, notwithstanding Mr. Overman stated in his evidence that there is an increased demand for labour (14,336 and 14,337), no scarcity of work (14,132 and 14,467), that wages have been advanced but the men do more work (14,183, 14,185, and 14,209), and that farming has not been so prosperous for many years as in 1837 (14,507.)' He had moved this resolution when complaining in the committee of the whole report, and he asked whether he had not a right to complain of such a delusive statement being sent forth to the country as that which he had just pointed out? (Hear, hear.) Such a delusion might deceive the House in some measure, but the country, which knew the truth, would not be deceived by it, and would only look with the more dissatisfaction on the proceedings of the committee. Before he had become a member of this committee, he had imagined that the handloom weavers and some others in the north were the most miserable of all the English labouring people, but he had heard enough, he confessed, in the committee to show him that if the people of the south were not now as badly off as the handloom weavers, it would take but a short time to bring them to the condition of those miserable people; and he begged to remind the House, that when the destitute condition of the handloom weavers was spoken of, it was attributed to machinery. Had machinery produced the misery on the land? He would pause, in order to ask the House whether it was not both cruel and impolitic to continue this wicked and obnoxious law, when it is working such results as he had stated? He could point out good, honest, and industrious labourers, in Bedfordshire, men whose characters were not disputed, who, with their families,

were living now upon 3d. per head per day. Mr. Ceeley, a surgeon from Aylesbury (whose evidence, by-the-by, was well worthy of being read), stated, that he was in considerable practice; that he was well acquainted with the neighbourhood of Aylesbury and the labouring people in its vicinity, and he gave it as his opinion, that, sickly and distressed as they were before, their lot had become considerably worse since the New Law came into operation; that he had inquired in what he deemed the best sources of information, the tradespeople, those who sold to the labourers the food on which they live, and they had told him, that they sold now less provisions to this class of persons than they did before the New Law. If this were a fact, he would ask whether anything could be more convincing? (Hear, hear.) If the baker, and the grocer, and the cheesemonger, were now selling less food to the labouring man than they did before the New Law, was not the conclusion forced upon us, that the New Law had deprived the labouring man of the means that he had before it passed? (Hear.) In the reports of the committee it would be found, that Mr. Weale, the Assistant-Commissioner, had made a statement of the wages of the agricultural labourers in Somersetshire, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire, and the average rate of wages per-day labour in a considerable number of the Unions in those counties is stated to be 1s.  $5\frac{1}{4}$ d. to 1s.  $5\frac{1}{2}$ d. per day. Mr. Rawson, a manufacturer at Leicester, stated, on his own experience, that wages had been reduced one-third since the New Law came into operation, and he apprehended a continued reduction. He (Mr. Fielden) had sent two men down into the neighbourhood of Amptill, to make inquiries in that neighbourhood, and they had taken a survey of the parish of Westoning in particular; they had obtained the name, number in family, and earnings of nearly every labouring man within the parish for the years 1834 and 1837, and the result, which he would state as short as possible, was an average reduction of 16 per cent. on their means of living. The tables establishing these matters had been put in by Mr. Turner, one of the persons whom he had sent to make the inquiries. One of Mr. Turner's tables, describing the condition of 48 labourers in Westoning, was adverted to in the report of the committee, page 4, as a proof of the good working of the New Law; but, while the committee were



discussing this part of the report, he (Mr. Fielden) had moved this resolution: 'That although the labourers have more money paid in 1837 than in 1834, as stated in the report, page 4, yet the table put in by Mr. Turner showed that the income of those labourers and their families had been reduced from 1s. 10½d. per head per week in 1834 to 1s. 6d. per week in 1837.' These tables had been attacked in the committee, and Mr. Pierce, chairman of the Woburn board, had been brought up to the committee to refute them, and, according to Mr. Pierce, these labourers were in the receipt of much more money than Mr. Turner had made out in his tables. But how was it? Why, Mr. Pierce found, that the earnings of the families of the labourers, that was, the earnings of the wives and children of the labourers in Westoning, at straw plaiting, made an important difference in the total earnings of the family during the year. Mr. Pierce found little to dispute as to the wages of the labouring men. All the difference that there was between his table and Mr. Turner's consisted in this, that Turner had stated the earnings of the families at too little, according to Mr. Pierce's account. He (Mr. Fielden) was prepared to dispute the truth of Mr. Pierce's statement. He had the names of the witnesses ready, and amongst them the names of persons who could have spoken from experience and with authority upon the subject—(hear, hear, hear, and loud cheers)—but these witnesses he could not get before the committee. In the absence of them, however, the House might find, by turning to Mr. Pierce's evidence, that when it was the object of the different Boards of Guardians in Bedfordshire to send families into the north of England to the factories, then the earnings of the wives and children were set down in Mr. Muggridge's returns as amounting to little or nothing. The earnings of a mother and all her children were stated in one instance at 3s. 6d. only per week, whereas Mr. Pierce stated, that young women in Bedfordshire, of from thirteen to nineteen years of age, could earn from 5s. to 7s. a-week at straw plaiting. As to the men taking their earnings, as they were stated by Mr. Pierce himself, the House would find that they were getting no more than would afford 1s. 10d. per week per head for themselves and their families. He (Mr. Fielden) thought he had stated enough already, citing even the authority of Commissioners and Guar-

dians, to prove to the House that it was necessary to keep a watchful eye on the condition of the agricultural labourers. He had received letters from all parts of the country, from so far west as Barnstaple, and so far east as Norwich, from Carlisle, and from many places in the interior of the country, addressed to him by magistrates, clergymen, Guardians of Boards, and by tradesmen, all complaining of the operation of this law, and all stating it to have the effects which he had anticipated with dread, and which he had often stated to the House."—*House of Commons*, August 7, 1838, on *Mr. P. Scrope bringing up the Report of the Poor-Law Committee*.

"My attention has been called to the last report of the Poor-Law Commissioners relative to the working of the atrocious Poor-Law Bill. Therein they state, that it has been the means of bettering the condition, and raising the wages, of the labourers, and that their masters are kinder to them now, than they were before the Whig law came into force. Now, as to the measure having bettered the condition of the labourer, and raised the wages, the statement is completely false. The rate of wages of agricultural labourers in 1834, was 8s. per week, and those who had families received bread-money for their children, which often made their money 12s. or 14s. per week. Since this law came into force, the bread-allocation has been done away with, and the wages of the labourers are now, in some places, 8s., and in others, 9s. per week; but if they get the additional shilling per week, it is not in consequence of the Poor-Law Bill, but owing to the produce of the farmer having risen nearly 50 per cent. in value to what it was in 1834. I will give a case in point, which is that of a most honest, industrious labourer, with a wife and eight children, the eldest twelve years of age, one of them only being able to go out to work, who receives 2s. 6d. per week, which, with the 8s. which the father earns, makes 10s. 6d., to keep ten persons, and who, if he received bread-money, as under the old law, would now have 16s. 6d., so that the law robs him of 6s. per week. This is only a solitary case out of thousands; we have widows in the parish in which I reside, upwards of sixty years of age, who receive, at this inclement season, only 1s. 6d. in money, and a 4lb. loaf to keep them seven days: the poor labourers in the agricultural districts are nearly starving,

whilst their employers are basking in the sunshine of plenty. As to their masters being kinder to them, it is completely false, for what is the consequence if the men should happen to grumble at the miserable pittance which they receive. The masters hold up the terrors of the workhouse to them as their portion, if they are not satisfied; and where is the man whose heart would not recoil at the idea of being thrust into a prison, and the dearest ties of his life separated from him? I would recommend the Bashaws of Somerset-house, ere they issue another of their manifestoes, full of fallacies and falsehood, to institute an inquiry into the rapid increase of sheep-stealing, and other crimes, and they will find, that it is this abominable Bill which has driven men to commit these crimes, to satisfy the hunger of their starving children.”—*J. J. Pryor, Harwell.*

“The Act had inflicted grievous wrongs on the industrious poor. It had reduced their wages—it had raised rents, and the price of food had advanced under its operation. It had completely failed to produce the two important specific effects which the Commissioners of inquiry, in their ‘Report,’ said would follow the application of the principle of administering relief to the indigent, which they laid down in the case of able-bodied paupers; that was to say, first, a rise of wages, and, secondly, ‘increased content of the labourers and diminution of crime.’ What was that principle? He found it in that book which, in another place, was called the ‘Record of Idleness and her sister Guilt,’ but which he (Mr. Fielden) said, was the record of the most slanderous expressions of the character of the poor of England that, up to that period, he believed, had ever been published by authority. The principle was thus stated:—‘that the condition of the paupers shall be in no case so eligible as the condition of the lowest class subsisting on the fruits of their industry.’ Before this had been put forth by Commissioners appointed by the King, it would have been wise to inquire what was the condition of the numerous classes of his Majesty’s subjects who were pining in want, although subsisting on the fruits of their industry. It would have been well to have ascertained how many handloom weavers there were, scattered over his Majesty’s dominions, who could not earn 1½d. per head per day, for the maintenance of themselves and those dependent upon them for support, but who, notwith-

standing, were not receiving parochial aid. It would have been well to have ascertained, how many labourers in the land, and at various other occupations in the country, were nearly similarly circumstanced in this respect, with the handloom weavers, but without parish aid, and daily dying of want, before his Majesty’s advisers had allowed such a principle to be promulgated by authority. Responsibility must rest somewhere, and if the New Poor-Law were persevered in, the question of ‘who is responsible?’ might be mooted, and the responsible parties might be called to account for having given this advice. The principle had been acted on by the Central Board, but it had not afforded the advantages promised to the able-bodied by its adoption. No: they had been placed in a worse condition by the attempt to carry out this principle of administering relief. And here he must observe upon the cruelty of refusing relief to the able-bodied labourer, when his earnings were altogether inadequate to maintain him. The peremptory order was directed against the able-bodied—those on whom you called to fight your battles—those you required to cultivate your lands—those you required to do what none but the able-bodied could do—and yet, when his labour failed him, when his wages were altogether insufficient for his maintenance, you denied him relief, except in your prison workhouses, and, in many cases, he had been denied that, if he had work at any wages whatever. He (Mr. F.) felt disgusted with the treatment of the able-bodied labourer by the Guardians acting under the Commissioners. He knew none in society more deserving of sympathy, than the virtuous, able-bodied man, with a family to support, but whose wages, notwithstanding he endeavoured to acquire the best he could obtain honestly, were altogether inadequate for the support of himself and those dependent on him. The proposition to throw the able-bodied ‘on their resources,’ when one half of their earnings were taken from them by taxes on their bread, and every other article they consumed, was both ungenerous, and unjust. But he (Mr. F.) had said, that the adoption of this principle of relief had failed to raise wages, and to produce increased content of the labourers, and diminution of crime. Look at the calendars, and to the charges of the Judges of assize, who were almost everywhere deploring the increase of crime, and suggesting education to prevent



it. It was food that the people wanted, and without that, education would not avail; and as to reduction of wages—instead of a rise, he (Mr. F.) had proved that before a Committee of that House. Many hon. members had stated the same facts; and, if the noble lord doubted it, let him appoint a fair committee to inquire.”—*Mr. Fielden, House of Commons, March 29, 1841.*

“The following is the account of a parish in Wiltshire, as given in the *Wiltshire Independent* :—

“ ‘ This week we will take a different district, and name Rushall, a parish standing comparatively in favourable circumstances, where the poor have advantages which, in many other places, they do not enjoy. This parish is divided into three large farms, the land is chiefly arable, and of excellent quality, producing, on an average, certainly not less than eight sacks of wheat, and ten sacks of barley per acre. On this fertile spot, the highest wages of able-bodied married labourers with families, are only 9s. per week (we except harvest work, for which, of course, more is paid); those without children, and single men, although equally able, ay, and willing too, to do a good day’s work, are put off with 5s., 6s., and 7s. a-week. We do not understand why this is; it appears to be an act of injustice, and we should be glad to know upon what principle the distinction is made:—If an able man’s services be worth 9s. a-week, then is the single man deprived of his due by being paid only 5s. or 6s.; but if an able man’s services be worth only 5s. or 6s. a-week, then must the difference between that and 9s. be considered as parish allowance for the children; it is high time this were properly understood, for if the latter be the case, the real rate of wages is much lower than it is represented to be. Of course, with such wages, destitution and distress abound. Many families are unable to obtain more than one meal a-day, and in many instances, that one meal consists of potatoes and salt alone, without meat, without even the coarsest bread.’ ”

“These facts are collected in the greatest corn-growing county in England, and, in most respects, one of the richest counties. Yet this is the lot of those who make it rich! The remarks which this editor makes, as to the treatment of the single men, are excellent, and the more valuable, as the case of these persons is the same all over the country; for, when we hear of wages being 10s. a-week or 12s., it is the wages of a particular class, as carters, for instance, and always of married men; but to say that ten, or even nine shillings, are the wages paid to the mass of labourers, is wholly false. The distinction is universally made, though the false wretches who were examined before the Poor-Law Committee affected

never to have heard of such a practice. It is, as the Wiltshire paper says, a scandalous injustice to the single man, or the allowance system is still pursued in another form; but, with this difference, let us remark, that it is a *reduced allowance*, and in its adoption, has first caused a great reduction of wages to the single man. We should like to know from some one of the coxcombs at Somerset-house, which it is that he calls *wages*, the nine shillings a-week paid to the married man, or the five, or six, or seven shillings, paid to the single man; or whether, both men being of equal strength, both having done an equal day’s work in the same field, he calls both sums by the same name—*wages*?

“Upon ‘what principle the distinction is made,’ we cannot inform the Wiltshire editor; but if he will look to the speeches of Mr. Whitbread, in 1796, in bringing before the House of Commons a proposition for fixing a *minimum* on the price of labour, he will see that the sudden rise in the price of provisions (caused by a putting out of paper-money) had brought starvation to all labourers who had families. Their masters reaped the benefit of high prices, but did not raise wages. Pitt passed the 36th of Geo. III., to allow magistrates to order out-door relief to the *men with families*, and thus stopped the actual starvation of thousands who were on the point of it. The single man could manage to *eat* and *bide* upon his wages, now reduced in effect one-half, and, therefore, he was thought well enough off. And fellows, like Colonel Torrens, tell their hearers that the Poor-Laws caused the allowance system! That system was caused by the wickedness of paper-money, and greedy and unjust employers. The abolition of the allowance system has reduced the married man very nearly to what the single man *had*, and it has reduced the single man to what is now so well detailed and characterised by the Wiltshire editor.”—*Champion, Sept. 2, 1839.*

“I met two men casually by the seashore; I asked ‘how wages were?’ ‘Fallen,’ said a lad about eighteen years of age. I answered, that ‘I doubted it, for that I had heard the New Poor-Law had made wages rise.’ ‘Oh! but I know it,’ said he, ‘where a man could have earned 12s. he now only earns 9s., and that’s little enough for a man to live on with a family.’ He then mentioned the name of a man, whose wages had been

reduced from 12s. to 9s., and muttered something to his companion about two others; to which the other replied,—‘It is a shame.’”—*Mr. Oastler's Letter from Rhyl, near St. Asaph, Flintshire, Oct. 12, 1838.*

“A correspondent of the *Oxford Chronicle* says, the weekly wages of the labourers at Burford do not exceed 7s.”—*Manchester Advertiser*, Feb. 2, 1839.

“With regard to the lowering of wages (which this cruel law has done, and will continue to do, in spite of all that is done to make an outward show of raising wages, when the same parties are secretly lowering them in all indirect means that is possible to practise): for instance—One poor man was out of employment, with a large family, and to prevent his going into the workhouse, to cost them a great deal of money, the two largest farmers of the parish agreed to find him and his family work: one set him to pull, top, and tail turnips, and fill them into the carts; and the lowest price he had ever heard of before for this, was 5s. per acre; but this farmer would not agree to give him more than 3s. 6d.; yet, on settling his account, and finding his complaint true, and that he could hardly get food enough to keep him and his family alive, he gave him 4s. This, of course, was 20 per cent. less than he had ever had before. He then went to the other farmer, who, though he was as rich as a Jew, would only give him 3s. per acre. In order to try to do them at this price, he (the poor man) hired five children, and took three of his own—one girl (16), another (12), and a boy (8), and all, he and the eight children—nine of them—could earn, was 32s. in three weeks—10s. 8d. per week for the nine persons who went to work, and the man had a wife and two younger children, which made twelve persons to live on the 10s. 8d. per week. He told his master, that he and the children lost part of the time, owing to the turnips being so wet in the rainy weather: and then his master made a great favour of allowing him to do some *hauling* (that is, rake and get up the wheat stubble) at 1s. per acre, when the general price varied from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per acre. The last day he was finishing this job, the whole family went all day without food, hoping to have his money to buy some at night, but his master told him he would give him another day's work to-morrow, and did not pay him; so he was obliged to go home and borrow a loaf of a poor neighbour, and they ate it for

their supper; and they all went without food the whole of the next day; for the poor man's master had gone from home, and he (the poor man) returned home without money or food, the next night, when the whole family sat down in the cottage, and cried, and then went to bed empty. Early the succeeding morning, the poor man went for his money, but his master could not be seen till one o'clock, and then he had only 7s. to take home, which he did, and got his family some flour; and as soon as they had eaten their dinner—and, of course, hungry enough they all were, for they had no food for the two whole days (except the borrowed loaf the first evening), the poor man went to his other master, who was to give him work again in turn. But his other master was there before him, whom he had told once before, while working for him, that himself and family had nothing but potatoes for six days out of the last fourteen days, and hoped he would give him more—but he would not: and when he took the 7s. before mentioned, on settling his account that morning, he was almost starved with cold and hunger, and forgot to say, ‘Thank you, Sir:’ and, going up to the door of the other farmer, he heard him say—‘He is a grumbling and dissatisfied fellow!’ ‘Then,’ said the other, ‘he shan't come here:’ and he told the poor man that he had no work for him; and thus he and his whole family were driven into the Union Bastile.”—*Extract from a Letter of a South County Correspondent to the Author*, dated Oct. 2, 1840.

“One man, not a very good character, with his wife and child, had been in the Bastile for some time, and when he came out, he could not get any work. He was not an able-bodied man, but could earn about 1s. per day generally. To prove the law does lower wages, I offered him 6d., and his wife 4d., per day, until they could get better employment. They were glad to accept this; and, although I repeatedly told him I did not wish to keep him an hour after he could get better wages,—indeed, any day he could get better pay, to take it, and come back to me when he could not get any more,—he actually worked for me for 6d. a-day from the 1st of May, to the 23d of June, 1838—that is, eight weeks, excepting six days, which were all he could obtain better wages for during that time. Not being an able-bodied man, this man was entitled to some out-relief; but two farmers in his parish, both lovers of this law, took



him each for a few weeks, and gave him full wages. This made an able-bodied man of him; and he could procure no out-door relief, and has been forced into the Bastile repeatedly ever since."—*Ibid.*

"I can prove wages are lower, and can be lowered to almost any extent, through the hatred of the workhouse, and its cruel treatment: yet the lovers of the law will always have instances of its having raised wages by paying some few higher as bribes and hush-money; in the same manner that the workhouse is washed and cleaned to give it every appearance of comfort; and they will bring a power of witnesses to swear, through thick and thin, that all are bad characters who say anything against the Act—and if not so, they make them so, if possible."—*Ibid.*

"We noticed, in a recent number, the circumstance of two men residing in Canterbury, being employed by a Guardian of a Kentish Union at the rate of 1d. an hour. The following extract from the *Sunday Times* will show that the practice is not confined to this district:—"Copy of a note given by Almond, the Relieving Officer of Spitalfields, to the unfortunate man Bartlett, having a wife and eight children totally dependent upon him for support:—Sir, Please to employ the bearer, Bartlett, upon the hospital grounds, at 1d. per hour, by order of the Board of Guardians. I am, Sir, your obedient servant, Thomas Almond. To Mr. Waite, Turner-street, Whitechapel-road, 31st Jan., 1838."—*Kentish Paper.*

"Norwich, in 1839, contained some thousands of operatives, whose wages averaged less than 6s. a-week. In Coventry and its vicinity, at the present time, I am told that there are multitudes of the ribbon-weavers who, when they can procure work, must labour hard to earn about 5s. a-week. Calico-weavers in Lancashire, as was stated in one of the Leeds papers very recently, are now receiving 9d. per piece for their work—which, of course, includes winding as well as weaving. Surely these prices are as near the starving point as they can well be reduced."—*Mallinson's (of Leeds) Letter to Merchants, Manufacturers, and Operatives,* published, May, 1840.

"I wish you had better news to send me than the sad tidings of another serious reduction in the wages of the already too poor mill-workers."—*Stephens's "Monthly Magazine,"* July, 1840.

"Bread is twice as dear as it was when the Poor-Law was introduced at West

Hampnett, while wages (if they be generally 2s. per day, which I doubt) have risen but one-sixth."—*Rev. E. Dewdney's (of Portsea) Letter to the Duke of Richmond,* May 12, 1840.

"The Poor-Law Commissioners, in their elaborate report to Lord Normanby, gives 11s. 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. as the cost per week of keeping a man, his wife, and five children in food only. I am very anxious to see how it appears that 12s. is sufficient for the purchase, not only of food, but also of every necessary besides, for a man, his wife, and eight children."—*Ibid.*

"In several families, the average income daily for food and clothing to each individual is only *one penny*! In a pretty large number it ranges from *one penny farthing to twopence-halfpenny a-day.*"—*Bolton Free Press,* Nov., 1837.

"In the townships about Manchester there are many thousands of handloom weavers, with large families, whose earnings do not amount to more than from 3s. to 6s. a-week, to obtain which small pittance they must work hard for fourteen hours per day."—*Conservative Journal,* Dec. 5, 1840.

"DEPRESSED STATE OF TRADE: REDUCTION OF WAGES IN WIGAN.—During the last week the wages of the hand-loom weavers were reduced on some fabrics of cloth 15 per cent. This week the wages of others have been reduced, and they are at the same time stinted for work. On Monday last, the mule-spinners belonging to Messrs. Eckersly, Mr. Wm. Wood, and Mr. Acton, made a stand against a reduction of wages, amounting on an average to 12s. a-week each. The men, it appears, are willing to submit to a reduction of 10 per cent.; but, owing to the number of spinners out of employment, and the improvement of the self-acting mule, it is supposed that they will be obliged to submit to the masters' conditions."—*Manchester Advertiser,* July 18, 1840.

"LABOURERS' WAGES.—A correspondent of the *Wiltshire Independent* says:—"I am most intimately acquainted with nearly all the villages in the vicinity of Devizes; and without fear of contradiction I assert, that there are but few (if any) farmers who give more than 9s. per week to able-bodied *married* labourers, and 6s. or 6s. 6d. a-week to able-bodied *single* labourers; the latter sometimes receive as low as 5s. per week."—April, 1840.

## THE BOASTED ECONOMY OF THE NEW POOR-LAW.

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"Curse on these taxes—one succeeds another."—WAT TYLER.

"I've seen overseers at parish-paid carouses,  
Who, drinking, could not see the trees for the wood,  
Afterwards tell poor devils and their spouses,  
To rob, hang, burn, kill—anything as they could—  
For the New Law grants no out-door relief  
Except to Barristers without a brief."—DON JUAN, JUNIOR (Second Edition).

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"The expenses of Radford Union, near Nottingham, have *increased* in the last year 29 *per cent.*"—*Champion*, July 28, 1839.

"The New Poor-Law has been most disastrous to the rate-payers of Chichester by adding *enormously* to the expenses of the current year of about £1,000, besides leaving a debt of about £300."—*Correspondent to the "Champion,"* April 26, 1840.

"Mr. Adcock said, that in Barleythorpe, the rates had been *increased* 25 *per cent.* since the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act came into operation. Several other Guardians also said the rates had been *increased.*"—*Leicester Journal*, April 18, 1840.

"That your petitioners have to represent, that though they have done their utmost to keep down expense in the Oakam Union, yet that in very many parishes within the said Union, the *rates have been much increased* since the Poor-Law Amendment-Act came into operation."—*The Leicester Petition in Ibid.*

"The Clerk of the Todmorden Board of Guardians, by the unanimous consent of all the Guardians present, was ordered to draw up a memorial to the Poor-Law Commissioners; and to ground the request of the Guardians to have the Union dissolved upon the fact of the *increased expenditure*, and the impracticability of carrying out the provisions of the New Poor-Law in the manufacturing districts."—*Halifax Guardian*, March 28, 1840.

"Where the rate-payers of Ipswich had to pay 4s. 6d. under the old law, they have now to pay 9s. 6d. under the new."—*Champion*, Nov. 10, 1839.

"Many at Dewsbury, who formerly supported the New Poor-Law, begin to be out of love with it, because they find that it does not lessen the rates, but that they are *fast increasing*; and a terrible

complaint is made against the *establishment charges.*"—*Correspondent to the "Champion,"* March 8, 1840.

"Earl Stanhope said, he rose to present a petition, which, though coming from an individual, was worthy of serious consideration. It came from William Okecliffe, a Churchwarden, in the county of Suffolk, and complained strongly of the operation of the New Poor-Law. The petitioner stated, that there was an *increase in the amount of poor-rates*, but that, nevertheless, the poor were worse off than before."—April 23, 1839.

"At the meeting of the Guardians of the poor of Marylebone, on Tuesday, Mr. Kensett asked why there had been purchased in thirteen days, *one thousand one hundred eggs*, at the enormous price of 12s. 6d. a hundred, or 1½d. a-piece, when they might be had at 1s. a-dozen. It was answered, that 300 eggs were consumed in the Christmas pudding, and 100 a-day were used for the sick. The clerk said the workhouse eggs cost the parish £100 a-year."—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Jan. 12, 1839.

"In the Treasurer's last account of the York West Riding, is the following specimen of Poor-Law economy: 'For the expenses of the Metropolitan Police at Dewsbury, and special constables to preserve the peace, at different times, for the Poor-Law Guardians—*one thousand pounds!*'"—*Conservative*, Jan. 26, 1839.

"On the monstrous iniquity and folly of the New Poor-Law, we have often enlarged: the *increasing expenses* of the system bid fair to bring it into disrepute, in quarters where its cruelty might pass unquestioned. We are sure that the cost of the New Poor-Law will be found, if fairly stated, to *exceed* the cost of the old system. The Commissioners, at all events, would seem to spare no pains to produce such a result. The expense which these inter-



esting functionaries entail on the country is *increasing at a rate absolutely astounding*. In 1837, their expenses amounted to £12,582. 9s. 2d., whilst in 1838, their expenses are set down at £41,250!"—*Morning Herald*.

"The rates have been raised from 11s. to 16s."—*Parish of St. Bride's Vestry Meeting*, March, 1838.

"The rates, which were formerly 3s. in the pound, at Kidderminster, are now 8s."—*Ten Towns' Messenger*, Dec. 3, 1838.

"The Guardians of Halifax propose spending £8,000 in the erection of a new Union workhouse."—*Northern Star*, August 4, 1838.

"The introduction of this measure into our purely rural and thinly-populated districts, has *increased the former expenses of relieving the poor fourfold*; besides entailing upon the inhabitants and parish officers, trouble and loss of time, so seriously affecting those operations by which they live, as to cause a most grievous evil to the tradesman and farmer. A serious consideration of the principles of the measure, divested of all partiality, uncontestably prove its details quite unfit for any but large towns and crowded districts."—*North Wales Chronicle*, March 25, 1837.

"At a meeting at St. Clement Danes, Mr. Dunn rose, and in a very lengthy and elaborate speech, contrasted the old and parochial law with the new. 'It had been thought that,' he said, 'a considerable saving would be effected when the New Poor-Law came into force. Those who thought so were miserably deceived, for a *greater expense* had never been incurred since they (the Commissioners) had established their head-quarters here.'"—*Conservative Journal*, August 26, 1837.

"At the monthly meeting of the Guardians of the Bury Poor-Law Union, on Thursday, a poor-rate of 3s. in the pound was ordered, *being 6d. more in the pound than the highest rate previously made*, although the expenses of prosecutions are paid out of the county rate."—*Bury Post*, Nov. 12, 1836.

"In Halifax, where it had been said that the system went on beautifully under the Assistant-Commissioner, the Board met last week for business, and voted away, in yearly salaries, 1,030*l.*, by way of beginning; besides that, they gave a man £140 for being clerk there last year, when there was nothing doing."—*Mr. Oastler's Speech in the "Times,"* Feb. 20, 1838.

"The parishioners of Isleworth are, at the present time, deriving the following benefits from the New Poor-Law Bill. Their handsome and comfortable workhouse, erected only sixteen years ago, at an expense of nearly five thousand pounds, is to be sold as old materials; a new one, to contain the paupers of every parish in the Brentford Union, is being built, where it will be an unsightly nuisance; one of their principal thoroughfares is blocked up, in order to form a drain from the New Bastile; their poor-rates are *materially increased* since the management of them has been taken from the parishioners, and will be still *further raised* when the workhouse job is completed."—*Northern Star*, Nov. 3, 1838.

"On Friday, Oct. 26, Benjamin Ellis, applied to the Board of Guardians, of the Epping Union, for some assistance to enable him to support his family, consisting of a wife and eight children, which he said he was not able to do at the present increased price of flour, with only 8s. 6d. a-week, which was all he received, after paying 1s. 6d. a-week rent. He hoped they would allow him only a peck of flour, which was all he required. This the Guardians refused to give him, and he was ordered to go with his whole family into the Union workhouse, where they are now supported at the expense of about 25s. 3½*d.* a-week."—*Northern Star*, Nov. 24, 1838.

"At Pontefract Sessions, more than £40 were paid out of the county rates, for expenses incurred by the Poor-Law Guardians of Huddersfield, in constabulary force for their protection in their several attempts to force the Devil-King's law down the throats of the people. Upwards of £300 was also paid for the London police for the same glorious purpose."—*Northern Star*, April 14, 1838.

"STROUD BOARD OF GUARDIANS.—A correspondent of the *Cheltenham Examiner* says—"In the Stroud Union, the expenditure for the maintenance and relief of the poor, has increased three per cent. since the establishment of the New Poor-Law!!! In the face of this, Mr. Thomas Hall, the Vice-Chairman, lately proposed an increase of £10 per annum to the salary of the Chaplain of the Union workhouse, making his salary £60; which motion was carried on the 24th of January. But why is not this £60 per annum saved, by accepting the offers of respectable dissenting clergymen, who

have offered to do the duty *without pay*?"—*Champion*, Feb. 7, 1840.

"The good people of Halifax, and other townships, are about to be saddled with the following *economical* salaries out of the poor-rate:—Clerk, £140 per annum; four Relieving Officers (£80 each), £320 per annum; Halifax Assistant, £150 per annum; five Assistant Overseers (£80 each), £400; Auditor of Accounts, £20; making, in the whole, the sum of £1,030, which would keep 158 paupers, allowing as much as is generally granted, that is to say, 2s. 6d. per week each!"—*Times*, Feb. 20, 1838.

#### EXPENSES OF THE POOR-LAW COMMISSION:—

	£.	s.	d.
3 Commissioners, at £2,000 per annum .....	6,000	0	0
1 Secretary, at £1,200 per ann. ....	1,200	0	0
18 Assistant Commissioners, at £700 a-year .....	12,600	0	0
2 Assistant Secretaries, (1 at £700 a-year, the other, £550 Chief Clerk, at £220 a-year..	1,250	0	0
220	0	0	
Clerks—8 of Class 1, at £200 a-year .....	1,600	0	0
8 of Class 2, at £150 a-year .....	1,200	0	0
10 of Class 3, at £120 a-year .....	1,200	0	0
12 of Class 4 (7 at £100 a-year, 3 at £80, and 2 at £70).....	1,080	0	0
Migration Agent .....	400	0	0
Office Keeper .....	100	0	0
Messengers (2 at £78 a-year, 1 at £62 8s.....)	284	18	0
Housekeeper, at £36 10s. ....			
Travelling expenses and allowances of 18 Assistant Commissioners, while absent from London on service, including salaries and travelling expenses of their clerks .....	15,318	1	1
Contingencies and House expenses .....	5,435	7	10

"At Hulme, the expenditure under the old Poor-Law, for the two quarters of March and June, 1837, was as follows:—

	£.	s.	d.
March quarter.....	398	1	0
June ditto.....	337	0	0½
Total of both quarters .....	735	1	0½

"Under the New Law:—

1838—March quarter.....	502	16	9½
June ditto .....	567	1	4
Total .....	1,069	18	1½

Balance in favour of the old law 334 17 1½

—*Manchester Advertiser*, July, 1838.

"The sum expended for the relief of the poor alone, in the year ended 25th of March, 1838, was £4,123,604, which is *two per cent. more* than in the preceding year."—*Companion to the Almanac*, 1840.

"Increase of the expenditure of the poor-rates in Lancashire is 19 per cent.; Nottinghamshire, 18; West Riding of Yorkshire, 12; Warwickshire, 9."—*Companion to the Almanac*, 1840.

"The rates have been diminished principally by the great demand for labour; but they have, in many cases, increased under the present system: as, for instance, in a Union in Berkshire to the amount of *fifty per cent.*"—*Extract of a Letter from Earl Stanhope to the Author*, dated Chevening, March 7, 1839.

Ultimately the New Poor-Law must fail even as an economic measure. It appears by the last published report of the Poor-Law Commissioners, that the *increase* of the poor-rates, in spite of every art to reduce the nominal amount, is, for the year, *seven per cent.* for all England, and *twelve* for Wales. For Kent the increase is *fifteen per cent.*, in some other counties, more than that."—*Kent Herald*, August, 1840.

#### COST OF UNION WORKHOUSES.

Place.	No. of persons house, to contain.	Grant.
Abingdon .....	500.....	£9,200
Banbury .....	300.....	£6,000
Bishop Stortford.....	400.....	£10,530
A Place in Kent.....	500.....	£5,000
Leicester.....	600.....	£9,600
Wolverhampton..	500.....	£9,000
Wandsworth .....	400.....	£11,000

—*Commissioners' Reports*.

"The Radford workhouse for 200 people had cost £5,000; and the rates at Lenton *had increased from £16 10s. per quarter to £91.*"—*A Speaker at the Nottingham Meeting of Rate-payers*, July 16, 1840.

"I come here free from all bias, boldly and fearlessly to plead the cause of humanity, and I ask how have the poor-laws acted upon the parishes in Nottingham? Has there been less expense? By the Poor-Law Commissioners' 'Report' for 1838, as compared with an average of three years preceding the formation of the Union, I find an *increase of 66 per cent.*"—*William Roworth, Esq., Mayor of Nottingham*, at *Ibid*.

"Whilst the poor have been ground



down in their allowances, the *higher order of paupers*, the Commissioners, flourish in all the chubby freshness of absolute plethora. Their salaries have been raised in the ratio of pauper allowance cut down, thus—Chief Commissioners, from £1,000 to £2,000 per annum; Assistant-Commissioners, from £800 to £1,500 ditto. By the workhouse bill the number was restricted to nine; there are now twenty-five!!!—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

“Notwithstanding the vaunt of the supporters of the New Poor-Law, that under it rates would be reduced, such is not the case in these parishes, a very *considerable debt* having been incurred by the enlargement of the workhouse, which entails a heavy debt upon the rate-payer for sixteen years.”—*Petition of the United Parishes of St. Andrew, Holborn Bars, and St. George the Martyr, Middlesex*, Feb. 22, 1841.

“So painfully expensive is the New Poor-Law working at Bath, that I feel persuaded, ere long, the rate-payers will be up in arms against it. The rates are *so high* here, that the tradesmen know not how to pay them; and, accordingly, every species of economy, bearing most heavily upon the poor, is being put into practice by the Board. Heavy are the grievances both of the middle classes and the paupers; and very soon it must come to a climax.”—*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. C. F. Watts, to the Author, dated Bath*, August 21, 1840.

“It (the Poor-Law) has also failed in the boasted efficacy of placing the pauper below the labourer. The wages of the labourer in the Axminster Union amount, to a family of six persons, to 1s. 2d. each, while the cost of maintaining paupers in the Union-house is 2s. 9d. per head per week.”—*Kent Herald*, August, 1840.

“A woman, whose husband had left her, but who bore an irreproachable character, being anxious to stay out of the house, and finding she could not earn for the maintenance of herself and two children above half-a-crown a-week, applied to the Board to allow her a trifle, but in vain. The poor woman was accordingly forced into the Bath Union workhouse, with her children, where she has been ever since, upwards of twelve months, at a cost to the rate-payers of nearly 9s. a-week, when about 2s. or 3s. a-week out-door relief would have satisfied her.”—*The Rev. C. Fowell Watts's (of Bath) Letter in the "Times," Aug. 25, 1840.*

“In the ‘Fourth Report’ of the Poor-

Law Commissioners, page 50, will be found the following statement, made to Lord John Russell, relative to the saving said to have been effected since the introduction of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act—‘We need hardly assure your lordship, that although we derive satisfaction from perceiving the gradual diminution of the burdens of the rate-payers, and from the conviction that the Poor-Law Amendment-Act has already relieved the country from a direct annual taxation of nearly £2,300,000 sterling, we look with greater interest upon those higher results of that important measure, which are daily developing themselves. *Note*—The actual amount of decrease upon the 462 Unions, after deducting the increase shown by the next column, is £1,627,826.’”

“The public have most undoubtedly a right to expect a *vast saving* and a *large reduction* in their rates in consequence of the thousands of poor who have been indiscriminately deprived of their paltry pittance, and frequently of their pitiful existence; but the more this matter shall be fairly examined, and properly understood, the more it will be discovered, that instead of the rate-payers reaping any benefit from the starvation diet-tables of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and the frequent deprivation of the deserving poor of any relief but a prison workhouse, it will be found that a very large portion of such surplus will be swallowed by *increased salaries*, newly created places, jobbing in building and altering workhouses, expenses of electing Guardians, and the general wholesale jobbing under this new law. All this (as a matter of course) it is the interest of the Poor-Law Commissioners to hide from the public view, and therefore if, with the help of their hosts of Assistants, who are living in luxury at the expense of the country, and depending upon the maintenance of this scheme, and the thousands of paid officers, such as clerks to the Guardians, Masters of workhouses, Relieving Officers, and suchlike, all entirely under the control of the Commissioners, they can succeed in persuading the public that the new law is not only good for the poor, but a saving of more than £2,000,000 annually, they will easily succeed in getting rid of all opposition to the New Poor-Law Act.”—*Mr. John Day's (of Southwark) "Letters to Lord John Russell."*

“At first the Poor-Law Commission was to be for a term of years; it has, we

fear, obtained a permanent establishment. At first, Mr. Edwin Chadwick was the sole secretary, there are now *three* well-endowed secretaries, and they are crying out for additional colleagues. At first, there were nine Assistant-Commissioners, *there are now twenty-eight*, who, in place of travelling from county to county, as was originally intended by the legislature, now pitch their tents in different quarters, and dictate every measure to Boards of Guardians with domineering arrogance.” — *Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, Sept. 19, 1840.

“Farmers, hereafter, will find, that no lasting benefit is intended for them by the law; new leases at increased rents, in exact proportion to the reduction of rates, will bring them to their former position; but, when the trifling furniture of the present poor shall have been swallowed up, can the present pinching be continued? Must not the poor creatures then flock to the Union-houses to escape starvation? In such weather as this, they must go or perish! The ‘houses’ must then fill, and consequently the rates must increase.” — “*Letters of a Suffolk Juror on the New Poor-Law.*”

“In the parish, or Union (St. George’s, Southwark), everybody knows how the rates have increased since the formation of the Union under the Poor-Law Act. Yet, in this Report (the fourth) of the Poor-Law Commissioners, we are told there is a decrease of 47 per cent. in the expenditure in 1837 and 1838. The Commissioners, in their columns, state our expenditure is, for the year ending the 25th of March, 1838, £10,938, whereas the actual expenditure, according to our books, is, the sum of £16,025 7s. 2d., and the money paid for the alteration of the workhouse during the year was £4,853 3s. 5d., making a total of £20,878 10s. 7d.—nearly double the amount stated by these Poor-Law Commissioners.” — *Mr. John Day’s “Letters to Lord John Russell.”*

“Practical experience has taught the Board, that the townships which refuse to come under the supervision of the Commissioners (and there are two of them in the Todmorden Union), manage their affairs in such a manner, as that their rates are not *half so much* in the pound as in those townships which have elected Guardians, and thereby put themselves under Somerset-house tuition and control. Langfield, for instance, one of the townships refusing to adopt the law, is

rated at only one shilling in the pound, whereas those which have come under the law are rated, one at 3s. in the pound, one at 2s. 6d., and another at 2s.; no township in the Union being rated *so low* as Langfield.” — *Halifax Guardian*, March 28, 1840.

“The fact that, at Ludlow, the extravagant salary of £120 a-year is paid to a gentleman clerk, in the person of Mr. Thomas, whose post is of a character to enable him to go *touring down the Rhine, for near three months together*, making his salary something like £160 for the time he is actually in attendance, is a great abuse, and a fraud upon the rate-payers; when it is a well-known fact, that several persons, a respectable solicitor amongst them, are ready to take the duties of the office for £80 a-year.” — *Ludlow Standard*, Oct. 17, 1840.

“Mr. Thomas Bond, Clerk of the Stroud Union, appeared on Friday last, before the bench of justices at Stroud, to answer an information laid by Mr. Parker, the Assistant-Commissioner, charging him with having embezzled and wilfully misapplied the sum of £5 12s. 6d. belonging to the funds of the Stroud Union.” — *Morning Herald*, Nov. 17, 1840.

“I have long considered that this New Poor-Law must eventually *increase the burdens of the rate-payers*, in proportion as the workhouse system is carried out. .... In this opinion I am fully borne out in my practical experience in the administration of relief in St. George’s (*Southwark*) parish; for with us, I have observed, that in proportion as the Poor-Law regulations have been acted upon, so the rates seem to have risen; and again, in proportion as the regulations have been set aside, and the Guardians have acted upon a discretionary policy, as well as with humanity, such as granting out-door relief, judiciously and carefully, to deserving applicants, so have they decreased. In 1836, whilst I was a Guardian, this policy was generally pursued, and the rates were at one period of the year as low as 7d. in the pound, and no part of the year more than 9d. In 1837, the Guardians were favourable to the Poor-Law, and, although I think not inclined to go its full length against the poor, still they acted upon its policy generally, and the number of in-door poor was considerably increased, the amount of loans was extremely small, one quarter only £3 14s.; but, what with workhouse alterations, and the Poor-



Law system generally being more carried out than in the previous year, the rates gradually *increased*, until, by the time they left office, a rate was required of 1s. upon an increased assessment equal to 1s. 2d. in the pound.”—*Day’s “Practical Observations on the New-Poor-Law.”*

“I know that all the small occupiers are paying more rates than ever they did, some of them twice and thrice the amount. But, although some parishes are higher, yet upon the face of any district, or county, their accounts may be *made to show a decrease*, because the Auditor strikes off so many items that used to be passed, which are not allowed now. They boasted, at first, of saving 40 per cent., that is, they saved 40s. and spent 40s. in salaries and expenses, and the poor only get about 20s. out of every £5 of rates that they used to have under the old law.”—*From a South County Correspondent.*

“The expense the keep of the poor cost in some of these Bastiles, is enormous—according to the Union printed accounts, 3s. 3½d. each per week. Thus, if a man, his wife, and six children, eight persons, are, for want of employment, sent into the Union workhouse, they cost £1 5s. 8d per week. But from these same printed accounts I have added the salaries of the officers, &c., &c.—that is, the expenses of the establishment, and then find they cost above 7s. 8¾d. each per head per week; and, in fact, although the food and clothing only are 3s. 2½d. a-week, yet, directly and indirectly, this same man, wife, and six children, these eight persons, who would be *highly contented* with an out-door allowance of 8s. or 10s., cost £3 1s. 10d.!! Was there ever anything so outrageous!! when the parishioners, I repeat, might have the man’s labour for 10s., and keep him happy and comfortable in his cottage, and, perchance, a profit of another 10s., which, mind, is 20s. per week on one side: these same Commissioners, headed by the Somerset-house Cerberus, compel the aforesaid man, wife, and six children, to march into a gaol to save life at an expense (directly and indirectly) of £3 1s. 10d. on the other side! thus making a difference of £4 1s. 10d. per week, to make, perchance, the man and his growing-up family, mark! robbers, rogues, and rebels; planting the seeds of hatred, malice, and revenge, in their bosoms against their superiors—not to

mention the after calling for and requiring a rural police, at an enormous expense, in addition, mind! to keep these said New Poor-Law-made robbers, rogues, and rebels, in order and subjection!”—*Ibid.*

“Although the poor are almost half, and frequently altogether, starved in these Union-houses, I think you may say, they cost each 1s. per day, or 7s. per week, directly and indirectly, all over England. Thus a man and wife, with four children, six persons, cost two guineas per week to make them wretched and miserable! Now, if you can couple such *facts and figures with your sympathies*, and simplify them so as they can spread, not only among the higher and middle classes, but into every cottage, you would do wonders against this accursed law. The sympathies touch the feelings—but the cost will make a double and more lasting impression on the minds of all ranks; for the higher and middle classes *generally* have no idea that the poor cost *half the money* they do; and, if aware of it, it would frighten them to such an extent, that they would instantaneously give more allowance or employment *out* of the Bastiles, rather than send them in.”—*Ibid.*

“Lord Melbourne, our Prime Minister, declared in his speech, on the introduction of the Bill, that the poor-rates were ‘a growing tax increasing every year.’ Now, the Parliamentary documents on the subject, completely refute his lordship’s declaration, for the *year previous* to the enactment of the new measure, the poor-rate in England and Wales, was stated to be reduced *three-and-a-half per cent.* upon the gross amount for that very year.”—*Blakey’s “General Principles of Parochial Relief.”*

“Previous to the introduction of the New Law, the rates in St. George’s, Southwark, were reduced from 18d. to 9d. in the pound per quarter. This fact pretty well shows, that the evils of the old law were principally in its administration, rather than in the law itself.”—*Day’s “Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law.”*

“According to the testimony of Mr. Gray, one of the Guardians of the Chichester Union, it appeared that the rates in 1832 in that Union amounted to £6,399 and, in 1837, to only £2,216; and where had there been a greater reduction in any of the Unions which had been formed? But was the Chichester Union

under the regulations of the Poor-Law Commissioners? No; it was regulated by an Act which had been in existence more than 80 years."—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons, February 20, 1838.*

"Under the present system a great deal more was paid for the poor than was levied by rates. In many parishes subscriptions were raised for soup, clothes, and money, for the poor; in short, making an addition to the rates which caused the benevolent portion of the inhabitants to come down with very much larger sums than they paid under the old system."—*Mr. Hodges, Houses of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

"How economically, as well as humanely, is this New Poor-Bill working! Of this his Grace of Portland is probably fully convinced.....I have been given to understand, that so great, through the summer, has been his Grace's apprehension of a visit from the acknowledged children of his Grace's favourite adopted bantling, the New Poor-Law, the Chartists—that his spacious splendid mansion has been guarded throughout, like a fortress when besieged. That nearly *fifty* armed men have been kept within, ready to defend it by night and day—none being suffered to pass in or out, but by watchword. How *economically* and pleasantly is the Bill working!"—*Mr. Samuel Roberts, in the "Sheffield Iris," Nov. 5, 1839.*

"He hoped they would see the propriety of following the example of the Guardians of the Todmorden Union, who, after being consulted by the Auditor and Commissioners, proved clearly that the New Law or scheme, *was much more expensive* than the old one, and unanimously resolved to petition for a dissolution of the Union. The Droitwich Guardians had petitioned for the discontinuance of the Assistant-Commissioners, as expensive and unnecessary; and the Worcester Guardians had petitioned for the dismissal of the three Commissioners in London... He had heard, with some surprise, that the clerk and auditor's salaries had been raised only a few weeks ago, and now they could not find means (being 800*l.*, in arrears) to meet payments."—*Mr. L. Pitkethley's Address at the Huddersfield Board of Guardians—"Northern Star," April 25, 1840.*

"By the 'Report, of the Commissioners just published, it appears, that 'several thousand pounds are saved by the New Poor-Law in litigation alone.' Indeed!!!

Pro-di-gi-ous!!! Well, then, there are the three Inquisitors-General, with all their travelling Torturers, their Informers, Spies, &c., &c., whose salaries and other expenses probably amount to more than a hundred thousand pounds per annum. Set this to the per contra side of savings! Well, then, it has been calculated that the erecting of New Union Bastiles, with incidentals, will not on the whole be less than five hundred thousand pounds to the same side. Again, the addition which the New Poor-Law has rendered necessary to be made to the *Army* (with all requisites) in order to keep the dissatisfied people in subjection, cannot be less than half-a-million a-year. This is something more on the same side. In addition to these—for the same necessary purpose—another army of Policemen is kept in constant liberal pay—to what amount I cannot tell—but it is said that, along with these, there is to be a General Rural Police to be spread (like the fleas, lice, and locusts of Egypt) all over the face of the country, to teach agricultural labourers to eat bread made of something inferior to flour, and to make them thankful for 8*s.* a-week wages. We will only estimate this at a hundred thousand a-year, but this is something on the outside. Then there are the Chartists—that religious body of men—(which we are assured, by Lord John Russell himself, would never have existed but for the New Poor-Law,)—have not only much added to the alarm of the country, but have consequently caused a loss, and an expense, far beyond what would be considered as correct, could I here accurately calculate it; at any rate it must form (*already*) a most formidable drawback in the saving in litigation. Then there is a great proportion of the SECRET SERVICE MONEY goes in support of the New Poor-Law, as well as of the holy Regium Donum—how much, perhaps, the Rev. Dr. Pye Smith may be able to tell!"—*Mr. Samuel Roberts, (of Sheffield,) Letter dated Feb. 10, 1840.*

"I have this morning received a letter from a clerical brother, to whom I had written. He states 'I understand that the parish rates are generally increased; and it is evident that this is the case in those Unions in which the recipients of parish relief are by no means so well, or so comfortably, provided for as before. Even in the Chippenham Union, than which a more humane one cannot be named, it is so.'—*Extract of a Letter*



from the Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath) October 8, 1840.

"Again, a clerical brother, in Wiltshire, has informed me, that where he paid, on an average, £38 a-year, during the seven years immediately preceding the operation of the New Poor-Law, he has already paid, since its operation, on an average, £52 a-year, and shall pay this year considerably more; at the same time adding, not that the poor are better off—far otherwise; for their privations and distresses are much increased."—*Ibid.*

"With regard to the increase of rates, I can only say, that with us it is alarming!"—From a *Portsmouth Correspondent* to the *Author*, October, 1840.

"Under the establishment of the New Poor-Law, I have no hesitation in saying, that in the smaller parishes the expense has increased; in about two larger places it has diminished. So that, by this centralization measure, little parishes are made to pay to the larger ones."—*Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman at Stamford to the Author*, dated 24th of October, 1840.

"The rates levied upon the town of Bolton are likely to amount to £16,000 for the year 1840. In 1834 and 1835 when the rates paid stood at about £4,000 that sum included, not merely the poor-rates, but the county rates and the constabulary charges. Now, however, vestries are changed into Boards of Guardians under the absolute despotism of the Poor-Law Commissioners, and the constabulary is changed into a Rural Police; and the charges for each branch of the local administration, the poor, the police, and the county, are kept separate. Of the £16,000 the Guardians require £8,342 for the poor. Sir Charles Shaw requires 3,920*l.* for his police; and the magistrates, within 200*l.* or 300*l.*, require the remainder to make the prison keep pace with the Bastile! When the parochial vestry of Bolton managed their own affairs, they could provide for poor, police, and prison altogether for the same sum as Sir Charles Shaw requires for police alone."—*Metro-politan Conservative Journal*, Nov. 21, 1840.

"HUDDERSFIELD UNION. — This Union is now involved in so great a debt, that its banker has refused to advance any more money unless proper security is given. We understand that none of either the elected or ex-officio Guardians will give it."—*Manchester Advertiser*, August 8, 1840.

"Lord Sandon presented a petition from

Liverpool signed by between 30,000 and 50,000, stating, that they had been under Sturges Bourne's Act for 20 years, during which time the rates had been reduced from 5*s.* 6*d.* in the pound to 1*s.* 6*d.*, that they were quite satisfied, and praying to be left alone."—*House of Commons*, March 26, 1841.

"Mr. Fall then proceeded to denounce the Poor-Law Act, and reprobated, in no measured terms, the conduct of the late Board of Guardians, who carried on their proceedings with closed doors, in order that their scandalous treatment of the poor who came to apply for relief might be concealed from the public. (Shame.) That system would, however, now be changed, as the present Board meant to hold all their meetings in public, upon whom the only restriction would be, that they are not to take part in their proceedings, unless to prevent imposition being practised by those persons applying for relief. The late Board, as the meeting was already well aware, had been building additions to the workhouse, which cost an enormous sum of money; and would they believe, that the late Board had paid to Dr. Barrett, and other persons, for a quarter-of-an-acre of land, not less than 4,530*l.* 10*s.*, this sum being made of several items, to two or three reverend gentlemen, who somehow or other found they had a right in it, when it was to be paid for at so extravagant a rate. (Cries of 'Shame, shame.') They charged also the sum of 725*l.* a-year for officers and servants, added to which there were salaries to the Relieving-Officers of 600*l.* a-year—(not too much, perhaps, for the nature of their duties)—master and mistresses 515*l.* a-year, and a schoolmaster 137*l.* per annum. All this was monstrous enough, but he now came to one of the grossest things he ever remembered. At Norwood, the parish had nurses at a shilling a-week, as a sort of premium on good conduct in the workhouse; there were also nurses under them, who conducted themselves well and kept the place in admirable order. All these poor people were turned back to the workhouse, and servants were hired to fill their places at an expense to the parish of 800*l.* a-year! Then they further picked up a schoolmaster, some enthusiast from Glasgow, named Stone, who wanted all manner of books, maps of England and Scotland, and Europe, and of Palestine (a laugh)—also treatises for making sugar—the West Indies (laughter)—for cultivating rice in

China and cotton in South America (roars of laughter)—and coloured prints of this thing, and that thing, and the other, even to a print of the 'Finding of Moses.' (Continued laughter.) But was this all? Oh, no. He also wanted shuttle-cocks and battledoors for the boys, and a handsome swing for the girls. The Scotch master, however, was dismissed with other useless persons, which already produced a saving of 350*l.* a-year. Mr. Whatman, too, had been dismissed, with considerable saving to the parish, the object of his dismissal being, that the vestry could do very well without him."—*Meeting of the Parishioners of St. Mary's, Lambeth, April 17, 1838.*

"The rates have in many places been increased since the measure came into operation. By the simple production of our receipts, we could prove this to be the case in the parish in which we are now writing; and a well-managed parish it is, according to modern notions of management, that is, the administrators of the law give as little to the poor as they can, and use all diligence, and strain all their faculties, to save the pockets of the rate-payers. And if the fifty thousand a-year which is paid out of the taxes to the Poor-Law functionaries, and the cost of Union-houses and Union-officers, were added to the poor-rates, is it not probable that the increase we have felt in one parish would be found general throughout England? But, supposing we add the salaries of paid Guardians—and let our words be noted—if the present system is continued, Poor-Law Guardians will, before long, be paid as well as Poor-Law Commissioners, Secretaries, and Clerks; supposing we add these salaries to the sum above mentioned extracted from the pockets of the poor, and, moreover, the cost of maintaining that armed rural police which is the immediate offspring of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, will not the sum total required to subject the poor to starvation be found not only to equal, but considerably to exceed, the amount of the old poor-rate, even under all the abuses of the old law?"—*Frazer's Magazine, April, 1841.*

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"TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHAMPION.

"SIR,—As it appears that the Government is resolved to drive the people to extremities, rather than repeal the New Poor-Law, it may be as well to show the base tricks resorted to, to deceive the nation, with respect to the savings effected

by that law. You are aware that an official account of these savings is pompously ushered out by the Commissioners annually; and that, when any one is audacious enough to say that his rates have been increased under the New Poor-Law, he is indignantly referred to that list as a conclusive argument. The following fact (and one fact is worth a thousand arguments)—the following fact illustrates most beautifully, the manner in which such list is made out, and proves to a demonstration, that no confidence whatever is to be placed in any document emanating from such an impure source. I shall give you it verbatim, from the lips of the gentleman from whom I received it. Let the Commissioners deny it, if it be not true.

"RADFORD UNION, NEAR NOTTINGHAM.

"When the report of expenses (increase and decrease) of the Poor-Law Unions throughout the country came from the Commissioners to this Union, finding that the report stated that the expenses of Radford parish, under the Union, had decreased in the last year 29 per cent. (the fact being, that the expenses had increased about that per cent.) the Chairman, Mr. Matthew Needham, was requested by a Guardian to have 'the report' contradicted by the Board of Guardians to the Commissioners. The Chairman replied, 'I think we had better not; there has already been so much stated with regard to the Commissioners and the New Poor-Law Act, that we had better let it alone!' The result is, that the report has never yet been contradicted. Needham is a crony of the Commissioners, a Whig, and he is said to be one of those magistrates whom the Duke of Newcastle would not recommend."

"You have it, just as I received it, from a most respectable manufacturer, gentleman, and Guardian. I will make no comment.—I remain, Sir, your truly obliged,

"RICHARD OASTLER."

—*Champion, July 28, 1839.*

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"The amount of poor-rates levied in 1803, in the Isle of Anglesea, was £6,167; in 1827, £15,285; in 1837, £18,270. In Bath, the poor-rates' expenditure, in 1839, amounted to—for the city, £14,168; and for the Union, £24,092. The average annual expenditure on the poor of the district, during the three years preceding the formation of the Union, was 19,928*l.*"—*Parliamentary Gazetteer, 1840.*

"His constituents were unanimous in their opposition to this bill; and they believed that this system had a tendency to increase, rather than diminish, the poor-rates."—*Mr. Brotherton, House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*



"A lavish expenditure of the public money!"

WHIG (when in opposition) STOCK PHRASE.

"At the end of 1835, upon the introduction of the New Law into the parish of St. George's, Southwark, there was a good balance of cash at the bankers after every claim was paid. But in how different a situation is our parish now placed, though the Commissioners will insist upon making their boast of saving us 40 per cent. (and at first they said 47 per cent.). At the meeting of our Board of Guardians on the 4th of April, 1838, the first meeting after the accounts were made up for the 25th of March, 1838, the statement was made to the Guardians, as follows :—

'Debts due for tradesmen's bills, maintenance of the poor, &c., up to the 25th of March, 1838 (besides workhouse alterations) . .	£2,500	0	0
Cash at Bankers to meet the same . . . . .	700	0	0
Deficiency . . . . .	£1,800	0	0

One Half-year's Instalment, due to 25th of March, upon the £6,500 borrowed for workhouse alterations (since paid) . . . . .	£325	0	0
Half-year's Interest (ditto) .	162	10	0'

This will clearly show a sum of £2,287, which, having all been contracted for, or a debt due arising out of what had been actually consumed in 1838, must form part of the expenditure of that year. If the money could have been obtained, it would have been paid, as was the previous rule; but the poor-rate having been *raised so considerably*, the people could not so well pay, and so became in arrear." —*Mr. John Day's "Letters to Lord John Russell."*

"At the close of 1835, when the parish of St. George's, Southwark, fell into the hands of the Commissioners, it was perfectly free from debt—no man had a claim for a single 10*l.* — and the first entries in the New Poor-Law ledger, Jan. 1, 1836, will be found as follows :—

'Cash received from Mr. Gilham, the Overseer . . .	£1,446	10	0
Ditto from the April, July, and October rates, 1835 . .	1,505	15	8
Ditto for Summonses on same rates . . . . .	10	4	6
Total . . . . .	£2,962	10	2'

Thus showing a sum of 2,962*l.* 10*s.* 2*d.* for the Poor-Law Commissioners to commence with, free of all debt, as before stated—a sum that proved to be very nearly equal to the entire expenditure of the quarter, including county and police-rates. Now, when the inhabitants compare this healthy state of affairs when the Poor-Law Commissioners interfered, and now find that at the end of the quarter ending the 25th of March, 1838, the parish was in debt, and without the means of paying a sum of 2,289*l.*; and that, besides all this, they are in debt between 7,000*l.* and 8,000*l.*, money borrowed at exorbitant interest for workhouse building, and that, notwithstanding all this mischief, the Poor-Law Commissioners have the audacity to tell the country, that they have effected a saving of 40 per cent.!"—*Ibid.*

"The expense of electing Guardians in St. George's, Southwark, for 1838, was 134*l.* 13*s.* 3*d.*"—*Ibid.*

"The rates (in St. George's, Southwark) made in 1835, amounted to 3*s.* 8*d.* in the pound, but in the present year (1838) to 4*s.*, allowing for the increase of assessment. The parish is also more than 3,000*l.* worse than it was at the end of 1835, which 3,000*l.* is equal to about a 10*d.* rate. The fair and proper comparison, therefore, should be as follows :—For the year 1835 (under the old law), rates, 3*s.* 8*d.*; ditto, 1838 (under the Poor-Law Amendment-Act), 4*s.* 10*d.*—difference, 1*s.* 2*d.* in the pound, besides the workhouse debt still to pay, which workhouse is by no means applicable for what it was even intended, there being no proper means for full and efficient classification; and if the Poor-Law principle of constantly 'offering the house' were acted upon, it will hold so few more than the old one, that it would very soon be full, and then the 'test' (supposing it to be good) is at once defeated, and the outlay of all these thousands is comparatively lost to the parish. After this explanation, I will venture to ask, was ever such a piece of deception and trickery attempted to be foisted upon men in their senses as to tell us the Poor-Law Commissioners have saved us 40 per cent.?" —*Ibid.*

"The disgraceful misrepresentations of the Poor-Law Commissioners, particularly in our locality (Southwark), are now likely to be taken up in thorough good earnest by the inhabitant rate-payers themselves, for it seems they cannot be persuaded, by all the ingenuity the Commissioners can devise, *that they are really saving their money, whilst paying increased rates.*"—*Ibid.*

"Barnett, the Relieving Officer of Nottingham, has 250*l.* a-year, besides food, house-rent, coals, candles, &c."—*Nottingham Review*, Nov., 1840.

"The poor in the 'houses' were to be kept upon the *fifteenpenny-halfpenny system*—it is still that sort of food; how happens it, then, that the charge for maintenance is now about 3*s.* 6*d.* a-head? Is there no mismanagement? Who gets the plunder? The cost, too, of clothing, is at the rate of 9*d.* a-head, when it is well known, that those who go in only for a short time, take no clothing away with them; still the 9*d.* a-week has to be paid. Now, if a man, his wife, and six children, go into a Union-house, and they are to cost a parish 30*s.* a-week, when it is well known, that not one labourer in fifty can earn even *one-third* of that amount; and, that in the 'house,' he and his family are separated, and are kept but one degree above starvation—where does the *one pound* go to? Either a poor man in full work is starved, and contentedly too, or the rate-payers are plundered when the families are sent to the house!"—"Letters of a Suffolk Juror."

"I have frequently known well-conducted young widows, and women deserted by their husbands, with two or three children, to be forced into the 'house' at an expense to the rate-payers of 10*s.* or 12*s.* per week, when the same would have rejoiced to stay out upon an allowance of one-third the sum."—*Rev. C. Fowell Watts's (of Bath) Letter in the "Times,"* Sept. 15, 1840.

"I need not give a better illustration of the deplorable and helpless situation of rate-payers under the New Law, and how they can be taxed to any extent without their consent, and against their will, than a fact that has recently taken place in St. George's (Southwark) parish. The official returns of the number of votes on the polling papers will show that the majority of the Guardians of St. George's, for 1837 (eighteen in number), were elected by a majority of

proxy votes, as opposed to the votes of the rate-payers. The Poor-Law Commissioners had long been solicitous to obtain a workhouse, built upon their principle. This the previous Board had refused to consent to, and had proposed a certain moderate alteration, at an expense of a few hundred pounds, which the Poor-Law Commissioners positively refused to sanction. However, the Guardians of 1837 appeared to be quite equal to the occasion, for never were men more obedient to their masters, and ten or eleven out of this eighteen, ventured and dared to involve the parish in an expense of 8,000*l.*, in addition to nearly 2,000*l.* more,—the extra expense of farming the poor during the time required for the completion of the job, and this for the purpose of altering (not building) a workhouse, in the *Mint*, one of the most filthy situations in the metropolis, without the necessary yard-room, so important to the health of the inmates, and without the means of complete classification, or room for workshops, &c. Nay, more; they borrowed the money at *five per cent. interest*, without any competition, and that from a private company, when no one doubts it might have been obtained at four per cent.; but then, the Poor-Law Commissioners *had recommended them to borrow it of that particular company, at that interest*, and this appeared to be quite a sufficient reason for these gentlemen to act upon, although it was notorious, that the great majority of the inhabitants, who had to pay for it, were opposed to it. A public vestry was called to petition against it, and did so almost unanimously, but to no purpose, as the job was determined to be done, and the money must be paid. Here, then, I think I fairly show, by incontrovertible facts, that this New Law will enable ten gentlemen, not representing the parishioners, to spend 10,000*l.* to please the Poor-Law Commissioners, out of the parish funds."—*Day's "Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law."*

"Already the eyes of the poor are beginning to open, and many a man, with a large family, very naturally now, in revenge for New Poor-Law oppression, says, I will try all I can to get sent into the 'house,' for the expense of keeping my family in there is so great, that those who send me there can't afford to keep me and mine there long. I mention this from practical experience; as a buyer of corn, I am much among the farmers, and



often hear them complain of the Guardians for sending men with large families into the 'house,' because, they say, they must take them out again, almost directly, on account of the expense. And they say, if the poor men, with large families, knew the expense, they would go into the 'houses' in troops, out of spite to those who had to pay it! And the poor men, in many instances around me, have gone in with their families, and have soon been sent for out again, and afterwards have been better treated. When they threaten, in words like the following—"Well, then, if I cannot get work for myself and family, or have some allowance (perchance for a sickly or lame child) to assist me, I'll e'en go into the building"—they have uniformly gotten out-relief, by some means or other, rather than they should be sent into the 'house.'"—*Contributed by a South County Friend.*

"In some counties—Suffolk among the number—though the poor-rates had diminished, the highway-rates had *increased*; for it had been found impossible to drive the poor into the Bastile, in which the dictators wished to confine them, and they had been, therefore, employed on the highway."—*Earl Stanhope, Freemasons' Tavern Poor-Law Meeting, June 24, 1839.*

"In Marylebone the rates had been reduced from 4s. 4d. to 1s. 11d.—*they had no Poor-Law there.*"—*Mr. Webb, at Ibid.*

"The mere saving in money is peremptorily asserted to be a pure delusion, sustained by keeping out of sight the whole circumstances of the expenditure; how much, for instance, that used to be charged against the poor-rates, is now charged to another fund; how much that used to cost nothing separately on account of the poor, as rural police, is now raised by the new system to an enormous item of public expense."—*Blackwood's Magazine, March, 1841.*

"Petitions against the New Poor-Law Bill, in whole and in part, were presented from seventeen Guardians of the Union of Halifax, complaining, that since the New Poor-Law Bill, the rates had been *doubled.*"—*House of Commons, March 9, 1841.*

"Mr. Grimsditch presented a petition against the Poor-Law Bill from 2,133 respectable rate-payers; they complained that the expense of the poor *had increased* 1,600*l.* a-year in the three years after the

passing of the New Poor-Law, as compared with the three years before."—*March 9, 1841.*

"The Poor-Law Commissioners had, as he had before stated, taken to themselves great credit for the vast economy and saving their administration of the law had proved to the nation. Now, by the printed documents which had been laid on the table of the House, on the motion of the noble lord, the member for Monmouth, he found, that in the year 1839, the number of parishes that were united was 13,671; and in 1840, 13,695; so that in one year, the only increase in the number united was 24. In the year 1839, the amount levied for the relief of the poor was 4,865,600*l.*; in the year following it was 5,213,898*l.*; so that in the year 1840, there was an excess in the expenditure, over the year 1839, of 348,298*l.* The Commissioners, however, said they had saved the country between 2,000,000*l.* and 3,000,000*l.* annually, but it appeared that that prospect would very shortly close, for he had shown that there had been, in one year, an increased expenditure of 348,298*l.*, while there had been only 24 parishes added to the general Union. What he had hitherto stated was in respect of the general interests of the country as affected by this law; but he would now refer to those interests which were more particularly local, and with which he was better acquainted. He would mention first, the Union of Preston, the town which he had the honour to represent. It was one of great extent, comprehending about 53,000 acres, and, at the present time, not much less than 90,000 inhabitants. In the year ending March, 1840, the expenditure of the Union for the maintenance of the poor was 12,632*l.* The average expense for the years 1834, 1835, and 1836, for the same purpose, amounted to 11,350*l.*, so that there was an excess of more than 10 per cent. in the expense, and he was informed, it had been found necessary to increase the next call on the town 5 per cent. For the town of Preston for the same year, 1840, the expenditure was 6,782*l.*, whilst the average for the years 1834, 1835, and 1836, was only 5,644*l.*, so that there had been an excess of 1,138*l.*, or more than 20 per cent. The average for the borough rate during the same three years, had been 9,867*l.*, but for the year ending the 5th of March, 1841, the actual rate levied was 12,349*l.*, showing an excess of 2,482*l.* He was in-

formed that that, to a great extent, was to be attributed to the distress that existed in that district during the last year; but be understood also, that it was to be attributed to their giving little out-door relief. He could not but think that that statement was exceedingly alarming; for it had taken place during the time one of the Poor-Law Commissioners was residing in the town, and all was done under his particular direction, and now he had left, in all probability the expense would be greater. From the town of Preston he would return to that of Chorley, a large and populous town in his neighbourhood. In that place, also, there appeared to be a gradually-increasing expenditure for the relief of the poor of the parish. It was only united to the other parishes in 1838, or, he might say, not until March, 1839. Now, the average expense, then, during the years 1834, 1835, 1836, and 1837, had been 5,930*l.*, but in the year following the Union, the expense had not been less than 6,430*l.* showing an excess of about 8 per cent. over the former expenditure. In the township of Adlington, in the same Union, for the three years preceding its junction with the Chorley Union, the rates were 22*l.*, but since that time, they had been 29*l.*, showing an excess of 34 per cent. In the township of Anderton, for the three years preceding its being joined to the other parishes, the average expense was 147*l.*, but since that time it had been 248*l.*, showing an excess of 70 per cent. He would now refer to the town of Prescott, with which he was not connected, but with the circumstances of which, he was well acquainted. During the time that town was managed by a select vestry, the average expense for the relief of the poor was 797*l.*; but since the Union it had been 1,361*l.* annually, so that there was an excess of 70 per cent. in that township. These were very striking facts, and he should be much to blame if he were not to take that opportunity of informing the noble lord opposite, that if the New Poor-Law had been such a great blessing and great saving to the country, its advantages had not yet reached that part of the north with which he was connected.”—*Mr. R. T. Parker, House of Commons, March 19, 1841.*

“He had always considered that the great value of every law was uniformity; but the Poor-Law Amendment-Act produced no uniformity; what was law in one Union was not law in another Union.

He should like the noble lord, who had had some experience as a Poor-Law Guardian, to pay a visit to the county of Lancaster, to the Bolton Union, to see how the law worked there. Why, at this moment, there were 6,000 or 7,000 paupers; whereas, at the formation of the Union, the number was but 5,000. He might be told, that this was a time of pressure, which he would not deny; but what was the machinery of the law in the Bolton Union, where the population was now about 100,000? He should like to know how 30 or 40 Guardians, meeting once a-month, to select different parts of the Union, could get through the whole of the cases. He was sorry to take up the time of the House, but he felt the feeling against the Bill to be strong in the densely populated districts; that an anxiety prevailed on the subject there, nor was it popular in any part of the country. He would make only one or two observations with reference to the particular Union with which he was connected. Its area was 60,000 acres, and the expense, which, previous to the establishment, had been 3*s.* in the pound, was now 6*s.*”—*Mr. Grimsditch, Ibid.*

“The petition against the introduction of the New Poor-Law Bill into the Borough of Liverpool, and against the continuance of power to the Poor-Law Commissioners, has, in the course of a few days, received no fewer than 40,000 signatures—signatures, too, bearing a character not generally appended to Parliamentary petitions. Independent of the feeling thus displayed against the bill, by parties who have had no opportunity of experiencing its practical defects, the opposite side of Liverpool, viz., the Cheshire side of the river, in the Union of the hundred of Wirral, has got up a petition against it, which is also numerously signed. The inhabitants of this part of Cheshire, in consequence of finding that the bill is wholly inapplicable to their district (although an agricultural one), speak out more plainly to the Legislature than the people of Liverpool. Mr. Ramplin, a highly-respectable inhabitant of that district, who has a thorough knowledge of the workings of that bill on the Cheshire side, says:—‘I find that the bill is a most abominable, and unchristianlike measure, and for a complete development of its abominations, I need only refer to the *exposés* given by the *Times* newspaper of the doings at Hoo, at Eton, and other places where its diabolical provisions have



been enforced. With respect to its economy, they had printed evidence that the rates had increased  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in the majority of the Unions. In the village of Hoylake, with which I am acquainted, there is only one pauper, a very aged woman, and this poor creature the myrmidons of the Poor-Law Commissioners would have thrown into the workhouse to spend her days, subject to those laws which I consider repugnant to the Christian religion, and to the laws of England. Friends of mine, however, exerted themselves, and procured to the old woman 2s. 6d. per week out-door relief, instead of being cast into the new dungeon; and, to show the admirable working of the system, to give this half-crown it cost the township 7s. 6d. in the travelling expenses of the Relieving Officer.' This statement of Mr. Ramplin may be corroborated by your correspondent in this respect, that he lives in a district which has only one pauper, and yet the district has to pay 60*l.* per year to the Union."—*Times*, March 23, 1841.

"A few days ago, a man, his wife, and eight children, who were receiving 6s. per week as out-door relief, and with which they were content, and managed to live, were told they must either give up the paltry sum, or go into a neighbouring Union workhouse, which latter alternative they accepted; their maintenance now costs 2*l.* per week !!!"—*Sheffield Iris*, March 23, 1841.

"Lord Worsley presented a petition from the parish of St. George, Gloucestershire, complaining that since the application of the Poor-Law Bill to that place the rates had increased from 1,742*l.* to 2,185*l.*, and praying, that the rate-payers might be allowed to conduct their own affairs in the parish under their local act."—*House of Commons*, March 22, 1841.

"Nothing could be more unfortunate than the selection by the Ministerial speakers on Monday's (March 22, 1841,) debate, of points upon which to contrast the two systems. Effectually silenced upon the points of uniformity, economy, and the effect upon the rate of wages, they struck out a new light on Monday. Mr. B. Hawes promulgated the discovery, that 'the great saving which had been effected, arose, not from any contracting of the comforts of the poor, but from putting down jobbing, and divesting the administration of the Poor-Law fund by a mass of interested persons.' We are to understand, therefore, that no saving

has arisen from the regulations which tear the poor receiving relief from their homes, and from the society of parents, children, husbands, wives—no saving from dietaries which cost only 2s. 1*½*d. per pauper weekly, clothing included. But all the boasted gain has been effected, by placing the administration of the Poor-Law in the hands of 'disinterested' Commissioners, and Assistant-Commissioners, Relieving Officers, Clerks of Unions, Masters and Matrons of workhouses, &c., who cost the country nearly half-a-million sterling in salaries every year—instead of that 'mass of interested persons,' the overseers and country magistrates, who never were paid a farthing for their services."—*Times*, March 24, 1841.

"Sir J. Yarde Buller presented a petition from the parish of Liche, in the Honiton Union, stating that the population of their parish was purely an agricultural one; that, prior to the introduction of the New Poor-Law, their rates had been decreased, and there had been no complaint from their poor—that since the introduction of that law three years ago, the rates had increased enormously, and the poor had complained greatly, and they prayed the House to dissolve the Honiton Poor-Law Union."—*House of Commons*, March 18, 1840.

"The *Times*' city article of Friday has the following passage:—It has been affirmed by parties in the city who have opportunities of noticing the amount of Exchequer Bills afloat, and the purposes for which they are issued, that not less than 2,500,000*l.* has been advanced towards the erection of the various Union workhouses formed under the New Poor-Law in different parts of the country. At the outset of this unpopular and odious measure, the estimate was, that not more than 800,000*l.* would be required from Government in aid of such buildings. The history of these, and other advances for public works, with a list of the uncertain debts, and of the losses actually incurred, should it ever be fairly brought to light, will form one of the most curious and instructive portions of the financial administration of the present day. On the plan now in use for keeping the public accounts, no sort of clue is afforded to it. Exchequer bills are put down as issued and paid off from time to time, but the old accounts in arrear are seldom brought forward, and, when they are exhibited, there is no possibility of collecting what the quality of the security is upon which ultimate repayment depends. Even

among the Union workhouses, it is believed by many well-informed persons, that the security in some cases is by no means of the best kind.' No arts will be able to keep this infernal law on its legs, if the people do their duty."—*Champion*, Oct. 20, 1839.

"As much has been said of the advantages of the New Poor-Law, and Camberwell is considered rather a crack parish, the printed account of the expenditure of that parish, recently published by the Guardians, to the 28th of Dec. last, will show the extravagant rate at which the machinery is worked.

	£.	s.	d.
"The maintenance and clothing of the poor in the workhouse for one year, is stated at .....	1,875	2	7 $\frac{3}{4}$
"Funerals of ditto .....	30	12	6
	1,905	15	1 $\frac{3}{4}$
"Salaries of Officers ...	689	17	8
"Ditto Medical Officers	263	0	0
"Rations of Officers in the workhouse.. .....	123	3	2 $\frac{3}{4}$
	£1,076	0	10 $\frac{3}{4}$

Showing the expense of management, as regards the poor in the workhouse, to be more than 50 per cent. The printed statement also shows upwards of 200*l.*, expended for furniture, &c., and no doubt the room where the Guardians meet is elegantly fitted up. And, although the workhouse is under the supervision of the Poor-Law Commissioners, yet 1,247*l.* 14*s.* 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* is charged for out-door relief. This I do not object to, but it strongly shows the impossibility of carrying out the New Poor-Law with anything but humanity, without out-door relief. There are also charges of 62*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* for stationery, &c., and 193*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* miscellaneous. Now, if the 1,247*l.* 14*s.* 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.* charged for out-door relief is added to the charge for the poor in the workhouse, 1,905*l.* 15*s.* 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ *d.*, it will make 3,153*l.* 9*s.* 11*d.*, showing the expense, even then, of this New Poor-Law management, to be more than 33 per cent."—*Correspondent in the "Times,"* March 9, 1841.

"An argument, put forth in behalf of this disgraceful measure, was, that the poor were maintained at a much less cost than under the old law. Now what was the fact? The expensive machinery by which the New Poor-Law Act was carried

out, had cost the country an increase of 1,200,000*l.* since the period of its introduction."—*Mr. Mann, St. Pancras Meeting*, March 8, 1841.

"It is now more than five years since the Poor-Law Amendment-Act came into this Union, and your petitioners are disappointed at not having experienced the beneficial results so confidently promised by its promoters—namely, the improvement in the social condition of the labouring poor, by which their independence would be secured, and their wages increased, and also, that the amount of poor-rates would be greatly diminished. That a reduction of nearly fifty per cent. in the expenses of maintaining the poor in this Union was confidently held out by the Assistant-Commissioner in his reports, published in the year 1836; your petitioners, therefore, regret that the accounts of the expenditure in each year from that time to the present period, have proved his statement to be altogether fallacious, more particularly as they can have no reason for supposing that the expenses of carrying out the new law will be ultimately lessened."—*The Barnstaple Petition, "Times,"* March 11, 1841.

"A numerous meeting of the parishioners of Lambeth was held last night, pursuant to adjournment, at the school-room, Lambeth-green, to take into consideration the assessment of the parish under the New Poor-Law Act, Mr. Sanderson in the chair. Mr. Fall said, it had come to his knowledge, about Michaelmas last, that the Board of Guardians and others had concocted a plan by which the assessment of the parish was to be given to three gentlemen, who were to be paid the enormous sum of 6,000*l.* for the survey (hear, hear), and it was in consequence, that the present meeting had been called. He need not tell them, that the Guardians were aliens to them in principle and feeling. They had claimed 40,000*l.* for the Bastile, but 20,000*l.* had been got back, and he thought they would have some difficulty in again getting possession of it. He appealed to them (the meeting) whether those who were called upon to pay the rates, ought not to have some control over the levying and expenditure. The Board of Guardians had, as far as they possessed the power, closed a contract for the assessment of the parish, but he hoped the parishioners would see the Commissioners on the subject to-morrow, and endeavour to persuade them not to ratify it. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Fall then



made a laughable allusion to the services of the officers of the Board, and, amongst the rest, to the duties of the surgeon, who, he said, had in the last year, 6,620 patients. He had paid 20,000 visits, served 16,000 mixtures, administered 12,000 powders, and 36,000 pills. This, at a very moderate calculation, would amount to £800 a-year, but the Poor-Law Act only provided £105 for such wholesale doctoring. (Laughter.) He would again refer to the Guardians, of whom he must say, that their acts would not bear the light. Nothing made courts so honest as to throw them open to the public. Now the Marriage-Act required, that the bans should be published at that Board. But could it be called a publication when, perhaps, not more than three were present? It was from this circumstance, that the parishioners claimed a right to be present, but not to interfere. The Commissioners had sent a long letter, evidently the work of Mr. Mott, and the Clerk of the Guardians, in which they said, they had not thought proper to throw open the Board of Guardians to strangers, as they called the parishioners. (Shame.) The parishioners desired to relieve worthy objects, but before a Board so constituted, the worst pauper told the best story, whilst the really deserving were sent away. (Hear.) The Commissioners said, too, that if the Boards were opened, garbled statements would go forth. So they thought it better the parishioners should know nothing, for fear incorrect accounts should appear before the world. (Shame.) They had also offered to hear any complaints in matters of relief, but he had sent them so many that had not been attended to, that he should reserve many he now had a knowledge of for a Committee of the House of Commons. (Cheers.) He would state, with respect to the rating, that it had been so partial and imperfect, that some properties had been raised from £250 to £1,150 a-year. (Hear, hear.) In many parishes, the inhabitants were making the assessment themselves; and why should they not do so? (Hear.) Those who were resident in a parish were best acquainted with the value of the property. He should therefore propose, that a Committee be appointed, to be divided into district committees, for the purpose of making a new assessment of all the property in the parish. The expense would not exceed £300, he pledged himself it should not go beyond £500. It

would be completed in ten days, and the great object—an impartial assessment—would be gained. (Hear.) The Whig Government would do no good for them, and, therefore, they must do it for themselves. (Cheers.)—Nov. 6, 1837.

“Perhaps no other Union has more reason to complain, than has the Halifax Union (in which Union this district is situate) when we state, that the expenditure has gradually increased since this Union was formed (now three years ago), from £11,000 to upwards of £20,000, in addition to which, the poor are more harshly dealt with, and the rate-payers saddled with the payment of from £10,000 to £12,000 expended in the erection of a Union Bastile, for which there was no need whatever.”—*Leeds Intelligencer*, May, 1841.

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“Observe, Sir, in the first place, how well the Duke’s interest is protected.

“Chairman—the Duke.

“Vice-chairman—the Duke’s tenant and personal friend.

“Deputy-chairman—The Duke’s tenant.

“Clerk of the Union—The Duke’s solicitor.

“A Guardian—the Duke’s steward.

“Seven other Guardians—the Duke’s tenants.

“2dly, See how zealously the Guardians have defended their chief.

“At the formation of the Union, there were four poorhouses, and among the foremost of the acts of the Guardians, was a resolution for reducing that number to one. In prosecution of that determination, plans and sections were prepared, and an enlargement of the Duke’s house at West Hampnett determined on; and within eighteen months, the three condemned houses were dismantled or destroyed. Regardless of expense, for (to borrow the expression of Mr. Assistant-Commissioner Gulson, in reference to an outlay of £5,000), it was ‘a mere trifle, a mere bagatelle,’ the worthy Guardians take up £6,000 at interest, and lay out the whole upon the Duke’s property. They deemed it right to prepare accommodation for upwards of 600 paupers, though it appears that the number of inmates since the Union, has never exceeded 150, and that the number at present is only 123. Nothing short of a combined assault from the labourers could have been anticipated; the competency, in any strait or emergency, of the power which had imposed

the order denying out-door relief, also to modify or limit its operation, was entirely lost sight of, and such a thing as a suspending order had never been dreamed of in their philosophy.

"Pray bear in mind, that this identical property had, for thirteen years, previously been held by the suppressed West Hampnett Gilbert Union at a rent of £40;—never, surely, was there a truer exemplification of the Droxford Guardian's assertion, that the value of land had been enhanced by the New Poor-Law, than in the present case; for that which had before been held for so many years, at a sum always considered a fair rack-rent, was, by the simple touch of the Commissioners' wand, so altered, that, without the slightest hesitation, it was taken by the Guardians at £60 per annum, being an increase of £20, and so cheap was it esteemed, that, in their judgment, they were fully justified in borrowing £6,000, and expending it on the premises! Happy Duke! Provident Guardians! Admirable Poor-Law! Some, however, among the 'best friends,' less enlightened, and more obstinate, than their brethren, were not quite convinced that the value of land had undergone so magical a change, nor that it was the part of wise trustees to lay out so large a sum on an uncertain and unsatisfactory tenure; for though the Board had, it is true, been engaged from time to time in negotiating for a lease, or for the purchase of the inheritance, yet everything still remained in an incomplete state. The obstinate minority saw, at length, with satisfaction, that the eyes of their fellows were opened to the pitiable condition to which they were reduced; and the Board became convinced, that no alternative was left them but to sue for terms through the mediation of their own clerk and his Grace's man of business. A reply was vouchsafed.

"Extract from the minute-book, July 4, 1836:—

"The Clerk reported to the Board, that he had the authority of the Duke of Richmond to state, that he fixed the price at which the house and premises might be purchased at £2,500, with a clause, that on a resale the premises be first offered to the Duke at the same sum, and a clause, that the Guardians should not have the power, during their ownership, to apply the premises to any other purposes, or, his Grace will extend the term (15 years) to 50 years, and reduce the rent to £50 from Michaelmas next, with a similar clause as to applying the premises to any other purpose."

"Now, Sir, I should like to see the in-

dividual among the Guardians, who, supposing him to be free and unfettered, and acting on his own behalf, would not have scornfully rejected both the above alternatives. That a man, after expending £6,000 in substantial improvements, and (exclusive of the money so expended) giving the full value for an estate, shall be restrained from setting a value on those improvements on a resale; or that, notwithstanding the outlay, he (if a farmer) shall not possess the right of converting his farm-house into a dwelling-house for a man of family and substance, are propositions that would be laughed at by men of business, and ought never to have been entertained by free agents; but the Board was in a dilemma, their £6,000 was in the Duke's hand, and they themselves lay at his Grace's feet. It must be confessed, that few owe more to the Poor-Law than the landlord of West Hampnett, for without it, the house would now be worth less by some thousands, and who, after this, shall deny that the law has worked well?

"The result of this monstrous waste and want of foresight, is, that although 60 paupers had, under Gilbert's Act, been comfortably accommodated in the same house at a rent of £40, yet 123 paupers cannot be lodged at a less rent than £310, notwithstanding £6,000 has been irretrievably sunk on the premises."—*Mr. Thomas Rodger's Letter in the "Times."*

"NOTTINGHAM UNION.—On Tuesday last, the first meeting of the new Board of Guardians took place. In consequence of Mr. Barnett, the Clerk, (an old pet of the Commissioners), having managed to obtain the control of the last Board, and, with their assistance, to build a new workhouse on an extensive plan, against the wishes of the rate-payers, expressed in public meetings and in every other legitimate manner, the town showed its sense of his conduct, and its abhorrence of the New Poor-Law, by electing, last week, twenty-four Guardians, all decidedly opposed to the rule and policy of the Somerset-house despots; seventeen of the new Board being Tories, and seven Radicals. Mr. Brewster, a sound Tory and staunch opposer of the New Poor-Law, was elected Chairman. Committees were appointed to inquire into the amount expended in building the new workhouse, to suspend the works (which are not yet complete) until that Committee shall have made a report, and to inquire into Mr.



Barnett's plurality of offices, he being (under the fostering care of the Commissioners) Clerk to the Union, Relieving Officer, Superintendent Registrar, and Master of the workhouse. The question of improving the diet-table was mooted, and a protest against the practice of separating man and wife in the workhouse was made. The new workhouse has already cost £13,509 15s. 7d., and the rates of the inhabitants greatly increased." — *Times*, April 15, 1841.

"Did the meeting know, that, in addition to the avowed cost of the Poor-Law Commissioners and their attendants, there was an annual parliamentary vote of 70,000*l.*? ('No, no!' 'Shame!') At the time the former Commissioners made their lying report, upon which the present bill was framed, those gentlemen had the assurance to say, that the poor-rates of England amounted to 8,000,000*l.* yearly. That was, he was prepared to prove, a falsehood. He did not mean to assert, that there was not that sum collected as for poor-rate, because, with the various addenda which the Parliament had heaped upon the overseers, that amount was doubtless collected. But then, two-thirds only of that sum were appropriated directly to the relief of the poor. (Hear.) He had never, in any instance, known of a man refusing to pay the poor-rate when he knew that that rate was actually applied towards the relief of the poor. (hear); neither had he ever heard a single expression of regret in his own parish at the giving of out-door relief. (Hear.) The speaker, after some few further remarks, concluded by expressing a wish, that every Guardian in the room would join him, and would exert himself to destroy the powers of the Somerset-house committee, and in seeing Frankland Lewis, George Nicholls, and Shaw Le-fevre subjected to the same punishment and the same sort of labour which they were endeavouring to heap upon so many of their fellow-creatures. (Hear, hear.)" *Mr. Murphy, Freemasons' Tavern*, Feb. 19, 1838.

"Now, he begged the attention of hon. members to the results of inquiries which he had made into the returns of the Poor-Law Commissioners themselves, to show how far there had, after all, been any advantage in the new system over the old. 'From returns published by the Poor-Law Commissioners, the poor-rates were the highest in 1818, being then £7,870,801; year ending March 25, 1832, £7,036,967;

that ending March 25, 1835, £5,526,416; that ending March 25, 1837, £4,044,741; showing a decrease between 1818 and 1835, of 30 per cent., between 1832 and 1835, when the rates were every year decreasing, 21 per cent., and between 1835 and 1837, of 20 per cent. When payments that used to be made out of the rates before the new law, and since then have been paid out of their funds, are taken into account, it is questionable whether the new law has effected any reduction of rates at all, and in this opinion I am confirmed by the reduction of rates in Lancashire, and in the West Riding of the county of York, where agitation prevails. In Lancaster (county), the decrease of rates between 1835 and 1837 is 17½ per cent.; in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 21 per cent. In a return made to the House of Lords, and ordered to be printed, on the 22d of May last, the expenditure is given for in-door maintenance and establishment charges for one year, ending December 25, 1836, in 125 Unions, comprising 2,312 parishes, and a population of 1,666,150, all that return embraces; and I find by this return, that the maintenance of the in-door paupers averages £5 11s. 1d. per head for the year—that is, 2s. 1½d. per week for each person in these Union workhouses; and I find that the establishment charges average £9 15s. 8d. per head for the year, or 3s. 9d. per week for each person in those workhouses. So that the cost of maintenance and establishment charges of each person in your Union workhouses is £15 6s. 9d. per annum, or 5s. 10½d. per head per week! By the same return, I find that the establishment charges in these 125 Unions amount to £2 2s. 0¾d. per head on the whole population of the Unions. And by a return in the last report of the Poor-Law Commissioners, the rate per head of expenditure for the relief of the poor on the whole population of Lancashire for the year ending the 25th of March, 1837, is but 2s. 9d. per head, that is, only 6¼d. per head more than the establishment charges alone in those Unions; and in the township of Oldham, which I have the honour of representing, the rate of expenditure for the relief of the poor for the same period is only 1s. 2¼d. per head on the population of that township; that is, 1s. 0½d. per head less than the establishment charges alone amount to on the whole population of those 125 Unions. Why, then, should this law be forced on my constituents by

bullets and bayonets? They wish to know why. From the same returns of the Commissioners, I find that in 18 counties, the rate of expenditure per head, with reference to the population, in the year ending the 25th of March, 1834, was less by 28 per cent. than the expenditure was in 18 other counties under the operation of the New Poor-Law in the year ending the 25th of March, 1837, and in which latter 18 counties a reduction in the rate of expenditure of 42 per cent. is said to have been effected since the new law was passed. In the former 18 counties, too, the highest rate in any one of them is less than the lowest rate in any other one of the latter counties, in which the saving of 42 per cent. had been effected. This shows that the Poor-Law Amendment-Act was unnecessary.”—*Mr. Fielden, House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

“Is the country enriched by two or three millions wrested, by power, from the perishing poor, and bestowed upon the rich?—no—it is impoverished—this is clear, and the state of the Exchequer already proves it. With its rightful owners—the poor—it was all spent at home in home product: by the rich robbers it is, in a great measure, spent in foreign product, if not abroad. This, according to the old proverb,—‘That which is acquired over the Devil’s back, soon goes under his belly!’”—*“Dr. Pye Smith and the Poor-Law,” by Samuel Roberts.*

“Every sane person in the kingdom, experienced on the subject, knows that a hundred persons in a small district can, at half the cost, be as well relieved at *their own homes*, as they could be in a workhouse, with all the expenses attending it. Pretty roguery there will be with the fellows sent round a district of twenty miles’ diameter, to take the bread, and the gruel, and the money, to the poor old creatures—for the conjurers have already found it out, that they *must*, in spite of the law, relieve many at their own homes.”—*Mr. Samuel Roberts’s “The Peers, the People, and the Poor.”*

“The town of Macclesfield alone has been subjected to an average increased burden of from 1,400*l.* to 1,600*l.* per annum, for three years, during the existence of the Union, as compared with the three years prior to its establishment, and that without any special cause arising from want of employment or depression of trade.”—*Macclesfield Courier, Dec. 1840.*

WORKING OF THE BASTILE-LAW IN THE COUNTY OF BEDFORD, UNDER THE DOMINION OF THE DUKE OF BEDFORD AND THE MARQUIS OF BUTE.						
Unions.	Parishes.	Population.	Expenditure.	Expenditure before Union, 1837.	Less.	Per Cent.
Bedford .....	44	28,033	£ 25,716	£ 9,212	£ 16,504	64
Amphill .....	19	14,357	14,602	5,556	9,046	62
Woburn .....	16	10,633	10,935	4,365	6,570	60
Leighton Buzzard...	15	11,824	11,257	5,769	5,488	49
Biggleswade .....	26	18,129	12,006	7,089	4,919	41
Luton .....	15	15,483	9,016	5,409	3,517	39
	137	98,559				

—*R. J. Richardson's (of Bedford) "Annual Black Book," 1841.*

—*R. J. Richardson’s (of Salford) “Annual Black Book,” 1841.*

“The Poor-Law Commissioners’ expenses are, in the gross, for 1839, 43,352*l.* 15*s.* 9*d.*; but this does not include the Irish Commission, which amounts, in the gross, to 19,496*l.* 11*s.* 4*d.*”—*Ibid.*

“The Waleses, North and South, hate the New Poor-Law as they do the Devil and Edwin Chadwick, and they have cause. At Tenby (Pembrokeshire), where the rates used to be two in three years, they are now three in one year! Again, the Pembroke Guardians have found the rates in their Union so enormously increased, owing to the establishment expenses, &c., that they have recently agreed to permit the pauper inmates of the workhouse to go out with the allowance of half-a-crown per week each, and 8*s.* a-year to buy clothes. So that, after all the expenditure required for the erection of the pauper Bastile, recourse to the old and better system is obliged to be had.



How nicely the Act works!" — *From a Pembroke Correspondent*, March, 1841.

"Among the exorbitant charges in the Poor-Law Commissioners' Annual Accounts, are—Somerset-house expenses, charwoman's wages, coals, candles, &c., 449*l.* 19*s.* 4*d.*; travelling expenses of seventeen Assistant-commissioned officers and their clerks, 13,817*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.*; Stationery, 5,000*l.*; travelling expenses of eleven Irish Assistant-Commissioners and clerks, 7,536*l.* 11*s.* 4*d.*; ditto of Architect and two clerks, 700*l.*; Contingencies, 1,100*l.*; Architect's salary, 500*l.*; clerks to ditto (one at 150*l.* and another at 100*l.*), 250*l.*; Printing, 2,000*l.*" — *Vide "Parliamentary Returns."*

"It was said, that the management of the New Poor-Law was more economical than under the old; and, with a view to prove this, Mr. Weale, the Assistant-Commissioner, stated, that the average cost of the population of Aston, is only 2*s.* 8½*d.*, while in Birmingham (under the old system) it is 5*s.* 5½*d.* a-head. Now, this was extraordinary, but he should like to know how the parish of Aston could keep their poor at a cost of 2*s.* 2*d.* a-head, that being the net cost of the maintenance, exclusive of the other expenses attendant upon the establishment. He found, however, upon unquestionable authority, that the poor under the New Law, in 1836, amounted to 4,254,000, or a burden on each of the population of nearly 7*s.* 7*d.* Where, then, was this boasted economy under the new arrangement? It evaporated immediately the test was applied! Let them go to Manchester, where the cost, taking into calculation the population of the poor, was 6*s.* 6*d.*, thus showing a difference of 1*s.* 6*d.* in favour of the old system." — *Mr. J. H. Cutler's Speech in the Town Council of Birmingham, upon the threatened Introduction of the New Poor-Law*, Dec. 1, 1840.

"By actual expenditure of the Nottingham and other Unions, it is seen that in-door relief costs 2*s.* 4*d.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* per head per week, for food and clothing only, and about the same sum for 'establishment charges;' making, in all, about 4*s.* to 4*s.* 6*d.* per week each, or 20*s.* to 23*s.* for each family of the average number of five—two parents and three children—which is, in fact, about the proportion of adults and children in the Nottingham workhouse, reckoning the school-children (as the officers do) among the

inmates. Out-door relief, for a short time, would be *thankfully* received at *half* this rate per family of five, and no breaking up of home, or permanent pauperising need be encouraged under proper superintendence; the good being thus kept out of the house, and enabled to get work, while the incorrigible, or those *proved* to be *unwilling* to work, might be imprisoned in the house, by refusing out-door relief to them any longer. Besides, *half the expense* being thus saved, all the heart-burning and discontent among the poor, and all the desertion of wife and children, which now is caused by the in-door test, would be saved to the country, and with it much of the crime and expense of police and military, in the populous districts. But the Poor-Law Commissioners report, there is an actual saving of 4,000,000*l.* or 5,000,000*l.* sterling. *Answer.* In Nottingham there is *no saving*; and if there *be* so great a saving in the rest of England, then, from actual cost above shown, it is manifest that the *saving* is all in *withholding* relief, and not at all (but quite the reverse) in the management and expenditure of the parish funds, as compared with the number relieved. If we take into account the enormous expenses of the buildings erected by the various Unions, it is plain that far *fewer* persons must, upon the whole, have been relieved than formerly—in proportion to the sum saved, the greater cost per head, and the cost of bricks and mortar given to the poor (instead of bread) in the shape of new houses." — *Roworth's "Observations of the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham,"* 1840.

"The New Poor-Law is, beyond question, far *more expensive* than was the law of Elizabeth. Despite all the efforts that have been made to *mystify* the public on this point, the universal rise in the rates has convinced many of the original supporters of the New Poor-Law, of this error. The *rates are rising* in every direction, and the rate-payers find themselves powerless in regulating the distribution of these rates." — *Morning Herald*, Dec. 3, 1840.

"Expenses of the Poor-Law Commission for England and Wales, for 1839, was 50,215*l.* 0*s.* 3*d.*" — *Commissioners' Report*, page 15.

"The New Poor-Law system works *so expensively* in Herefordshire, that the Guardians of the parishes of the Dore Union declare, that they originally only

entered into a contract with the Poor-Law Commissioners for three years, and that the third year will expire in the summer of 1841, when they are determined they will not renew the contract, but break up the Union, and support and manage their own poor as they used to do, which they say they could do for much less cost to themselves, and much more comfort to the paupers, than under the present new system. They declare, that they have examined the accounts, and find that so much of the money is dwindled away in salaries and establishment expenses, that the poor do not receive more than *one-third*, or fourpence out of every shilling subscribed for their support by the rate-payers. The farmers, too, in these parishes protest, that they cannot stand the expense, and that it will be impossible for them to keep on their farms and pay such high rates."—*From a Dore Correspondent of the Author's*, Dec., 1840.

"**FAT COMMISSIONERS AND LEAN PAUPERS.**—Let us contrast the salary of Nicholls and his Assistant, Hall, with the sum of money voted to maintain the Irish paupers in the two metropolitan Unions, by which it will be seen, that our paternal Government think more of two Commissioners, than a swarm of our native mendicants:—

## ANNUAL EXPENSES OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

Mr. Nicholl's salary .....	£2,500
Travelling Expenses, &c. ....	1,500
Mr. Hall's salary .....	1,500
	<hr/>
	£5,500

## ANNUAL EXPENSES OF TWO DUBLIN UNIONS.

Food for 1,500 paupers in the North Union Workhouse .....	£1,300
Ditto for 1,800 ditto in the South ditto .....	1,600
	<hr/>
Total .....	£2,900

Increase upon the expenses of the two Unions .....	£2,600
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"The New Poor-Law has worked badly for *both the rate-payers and the poor* at Nottingham: we have *paid more money*, and they have had less comfort. .... Mr. Barnett (the Relieving Officer) says, there is *no material increase*. It is painful to see any person who professes to be a conscientious man, so guilty of a misrepresentation and perversion of facts, and departing from honesty of purpose, in not giving a plain statement, which the multiplicity of offices enabled the author, in this instance, to do, and not by any subtle means attempt to cover the truth, *as the following facts will prove has been done*:—

"Sept. 12, 1840.

"Dear Sir,—I wish you would inform me what has been the expense of St. Mary's parish, in maintaining the poor for the last three years, and what has been the increase in the expenditure as compared with the three years previous to the Union.

"I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

"W. ROWORTH.

"To Mr. T. H. Smith, Auditor,

"Nottingham."

"Sept. 15, 1840.

"Dear Sir,—I have great pleasure in complying with your request for a return of the expenditure of St. Mary's parish for three years before the Union, and for three years since the Union, and I am sorry to find it exhibits such an unfavourable result.

"I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

"Your faithful servant,

"T. H. SMITH.

"To W. Roworth, Esq., Mayor,

"Nottingham."

"Payments to the Union, by St. Mary's parish, for the year ending Michaelmas, 1837 .....	£10,590	15	5
"Ditto, ditto, 1838 .....	18,761	2	2
"Ditto, ditto, 1839 .....	10,671	5	4
	<hr/>		
	£40,023	2	11

"Average of three years since the Union .....

"Average of three years before the Union .....

"Increase, per annum .....

"Or 57½ per cent.!!!"

We demand of the no-patronage-loving Government, for what purpose is either Nicholls or Hall required? Ought not the Guardians to be able to carry on the business of their Unions, now that the 'Act' is in full operation, without the superintendence of these overpaid Bashaws of a Whig administration?"—The "*World*," *Dublin paper*, Dec., 1840. [Are we to understand that body and soul are kept together for 20s. a-year?]

It is evident from the *facts produced*, that Nottingham is now, and has been ever since the Union was formed, paying *considerably more* for the maintenance, or mismanagement of the poor: they are evidently worse treated, and more neglected; and if the expense is *not decreased*, why is the town put under such mismanagement? *Who are benefited by it?* I can only know of such whose salaries are increased."—Roworth's "*Observa-*



*tions of the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham."*

"With respect to expense, we have before shown, that it is far *more expensive* than the old system, for the sum levied for the use of the poor last year, was 1,200,000*l.* more than the preceding."—*Stockport Advertiser*, Feb., 1841.

"The truth was, that in order to produce an appearance of saving, the Commissioners had struck off very many charges which used to affect the rate, and which were now fixed upon the county-rate. The money was taken out of John Bull's left pocket instead of his right."—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

"John Miller, belonging to the parish of Boldre, about eighteen months ago, applied to the Board of the Lymington Guardians, to grant him a loaf, in consequence of great pressure of distress at that time; his children being much debilitated by a sickness, from which they were slowly recovering. Having a wife and eight children, although in regular work, he was unable to meet the results of

domestic visitation without aid. It was well known that his utter pauperism would follow a refusal; yet, such was the tenacity of adhesion to the principle of this law, that a stern denial of any relief but the house was awarded to his application. The man was necessitated to quit his regular employment, and enter the Union-house, where he has remained an inmate during the last eighteen months, at a cost to the parish of Boldre of nearly 30*s.* a-week, for himself and family, instead of 1*s.* 6*d.* per week, being the amount of relief originally sought."—*Morning Herald*, Jan. 21, 1841.

"That your petitioners, at the time of joining the Stepney Union, were paying a quarterly poor-rate of 10*d.* in the pound, on the original assessment of the parish; but since that period, they have been re-assessed at an additional rating of *sixteen per cent.*, and are now paying on such increased assessment, a quarterly poor-rate of 1*s.* 2*d.* in the pound, making an increase of upwards of 50 per cent."—*The Petition of St. Paul's, Shadwell, Middlesex*, Feb. 18, 1841.

## INCREASE OF CRIME UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE NEW POOR-LAW.

“Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap.”—RICHARD II., Act 2, s. 4.

LAGO.—“What, ho! Brabantio! thieves! thieves! thieves! thieves!

Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!—

Thieves! thieves!”—OTHELLO, Act 1, s. 1.

“It is much to be lamented, that since the Poor-Law Amendment-Act has come into operation, vagrancy has *greatly increased* in this neighbourhood.”—*Cardiff Herald*, Aug. 3, 1838.

“Lord Wynford said, that the statement which he had made was founded on authentic returns, which showed that crime *had increased*, not in Suffolk, or in any other county in particular, but that there had been an increase to the extent of 800 or 900 in the number of crimes perpetrated throughout the kingdom generally.”—*House of Lords*, March 20, 1838.

“Under the 43d of Elizabeth, crimes were hardly known in this neighbourhood (Cardiganshire), but since the New Poor-Law Amendment-Act came into operation, which is just nine months, they have *increased to an alarming extent*, and their perpetrators have, as yet, escaped undetected.”—*Dispatch*, March 25, 1838.

“On casting up the books at the Preston police-office, for the year commencing on the 2d of Dec., 1838, and terminating the 2d of Dec., 1839, we find, that during that period, 1,364 have been taken into custody on charges of misdemeanours, 468 charged with felony, 7 for uttering base coin, and 11 for embezzlement; making in all, 1,870 cases within the twelve months.”—*Champion*, Dec. 8, 1839.

“The more numerous descriptions of depredations in the rural districts, are of depredations on produce.....The depredations in some rural districts are carried on to such an extent, as even to threaten to put a stop to useful sorts of cultivation.....The Guardian of the parish of Braughing, in the Bishop Stortford Union (Essex) says, ‘During the whole of last winter (1838) scarcely a week passed without sheep, pigs, poultry, corn, or straw, being stolen.....’The Guardians of the parish of Sandau, in the Bunting-

ford Union (Herts), state, ‘More barns have been broken into—a greater number of hogs and sheep have been stolen within these few years, than in former years.’—*First Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire as to the best means of establishing an efficient Constabulary Force in the Counties of England and Wales*, pp. 70, 72, 78.

“You may recollect, perhaps, at the beginning of this year, the complaint of the learned judges was all over the country of the *great increase* of crime.”—*Recorder of the Bath Quarter-Sessions*, July 9, 1840.

“It used to be a common remark, that a street-robbery was hardly known in Manchester. Far different, however, is the state of the case now. Street-robberies have *very much increased*, and have in this respect, therefore, kept pace with every other sort of depredation.”—*Manchester Advertiser*, July 18, 1840.

“In the first class of offences—in rape and attempts to ravish, there is an *increase of eight per cent*. In the second class—the violent offences against property, the increase of the last year is *six per cent*. The principal increase in the second class has been in burglary, and in house, shop, and warehouse breaking. It is in the third class, containing the great bulk of offences committed by simple theft or fraud, that the increase has principally occurred, having amounted to nearly *seventeen per cent*. In sheep-stealing there has been a *considerable increase* in each of the two last years, and in larceny by servants in each of the last four years. In simple larceny alone, the increase *exceeds* 18 per cent.”—*Criminal Tables*, 1839.

“Crime has also decreased.”—*Fourth Annual Report of the Poor-Law Commissioners*, 1839. [Ha! ha! ha! Well done Somerset-house! Newgate’s nothing to you! Your ‘Reports’ beat ropes hollow; hemp falls at the very perusal of them. Continue ye men of



unimpeachable veracity thus to kill your sheep in preference to your lambs; 'tis no more trouble when your hands are in! —G. R.W. B.]

"During the past month, sheep-stealing has been carried on to an unprecedented extent in the neighbourhood of Windsor and Eton. Within the last three weeks, no fewer than 22 sheep have been stolen in the neighbourhood of Old Windsor and the opposite side of the Thames."—*Conservative Journal*, Nov. 14, 1840.

"On the highways of a large part of the country, commercial travellers, and strangers, who travel singly, otherwise than by public conveyances, and carry money about them, abstain from travelling after dark, from fear of robbery and violence, and farmers return from market in company, from the like fear after dark."—*First Report of the Constabulary Force Commissioners* (viz., Messrs. Lefevre, Rowan, and Edwin Chadwick, alias Poor-Law Commissioners).

"CONCEALING BIRTHS. — In 1817 there were ten cases for England and Wales; in 1827, five; in 1837, forty-one. Of crime generally, in the same decimal periods,—in 1817, the convictions were 13,932; in 1827, they were 17,921; in 1837, they were 23,612. The transported convicts for the aforesaid years were, in 1817, 1,734; in 1827, 2,725; in 1837, 3,781."

"INCREASE OF PAUPERISM; OR, SOMERSET-HOUSE CRIME.—In the Kensington Union, on the 10th of Nov., 1839, the total number of in-door paupers was 920, and of those receiving out-door relief, 2,177,—forming an aggregate of 3,097. On the 14th of Nov., 1840, the corresponding numbers were 1,142 and 2,305, making an aggregate of 3,447,—thus showing, in one year, an increase of 222 in-door, and 208 out-door paupers, being a total increase upon the former year of 430.....The increase of *Commissioners' Crime* in the City of London Union was, during the quarter ending Lady-day, 1840, 1664, being one in every thirty-four of the whole population."—*Memorial of the Kensington Guardians to the Poor-Law Commissioners*, Nov. 26, 1840.

"From the influence of the false assumptions on which the New Poor-Law is based, the security of property is exposed to the rudest shocks; and the property-owning classes begin to feel this melancholy consequence of the Malthu-

sian scheme for robbing labour of its title to protection. What means the anxiety of the advocates of the New Poor-Law to introduce a rural police into every parish in the kingdom? That anxiety involves the confession, that property is less secure than it formerly was; and that their favourite measure, instead of elevating the moral character of the poor, has converted large bodies of labourers into thieves and desperadoes!"—*Morning Herald*, Dec. 3, 1840.

"The number of commitments to the Lewes House of Correction, from Oct., 1839, to the present date, has been 993:—85 above the number of the last year ..... The number of persons charged with felonies and misdemeanors for trial at Lewes, not only exceeds that of the last year, but also that of the year before... I am sorry to learn from calculations made at the Home Office, that the proportion of female criminals, in general, has been on the increase for several years..... We have to deplore a melancholy increase in the most offensive crimes. The number of persons charged with those grave offences being more than thrice that in 1838 and 1839.....Burglary and sheep-stealing,—the real amount of these crimes, especially the latter, is very alarmingly increased."—*The Rev. Richard Burnett's "Labours and Observations in the Lewes House of Correction,"* 1840.

"THE INCREASE OF COMMISSIONERS' CRIME IN THE METROPOLITAN UNIONS. —The number of pauper inmates in the Metropolitan workhouses, Christmas-day, 1840, were—St. George's 386; St. Marylebone, 1,750; St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, 470; Strand Union, 650; Clerkenwell, 540; City Union, 1,200; Whitechapel, 721; St. George's-in-the-East, 630; St. Mary's, Lambeth, 833; Christchurch, Blackfriars, 420; St. Olave's, Southwark, 230; Bermondsey workhouse, 450."

"The crime of incendiarism appears to be on the increase, Thursday's *Police Gazette* containing four offers of reward for the discovery and apprehension of the miscreants."—*Conservative Journal*, Feb. 13, 1841.

"With respect to crime, it is greatly to the credit of the poor people that many more of them have not turned thieves, though certainly sheep-stealing, fence-breaking, &c., have much increased."—*Extract of a letter to the Author from the Rev. W. M. Smith Marriott, of Horsmonden, near Tunbridge, Kent*, Feb. 10, 1841.

"Much has been said of the moral improvement of the people through this New Poor-Law; but he contended, that morality had retrograded since it passed; and proved, that in the very assertion of those Ministers, who brought in this law—that the Rural Police was *necessary* on account of the increase of crime of the people."—*G. Goldney, Esq., Bristol Anti-Poor-Law Meeting, Feb. 11, 1841.*

"The Criminal Tables for 1839 show a considerable increase in the number of persons committed for trial in that year—amounting to 5.8 per cent. The increase is spread over 25 English counties, and 9 Welsh counties, and amounts to 2,027 persons, or 12.5 per cent. Among the counties in which the increase arises, are the large northern and midland manufacturing counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Yorkshire; the metropolitan counties of Middlesex and Surrey; the mining and coal districts of Cornwall and Durham; and the agricultural counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Bucks, Berks, Oxford, Hants, Wilts, Dorset, Devon, Hereford, and Salop."—*Companion to the Almanac, 1841.*

	1837.	1838.	1839.
"Offences against the person . . . .	12.1 dec	8.1 inc	8.1 inc.
"Malicious offences against property . . . . .	32.1 dec	21.9 dec.	17.9 inc.
"Offences against property committed without violence.	16.8 inc.	3.3 dec.	5.3 inc."

—*Redgrave's Tables.*

"The principal increase in the last year is an increase in the attempts to murder; and all those of most frequent commission have *increased*—such as larceny, ditto in dwelling-houses, from the person, and by servants, (which latter offence has increased 20 per cent. last year) embezzlement, fraud, and receiving stolen goods"

—*Companion to the Almanac, 1841.*

"Mr. Smy, of Rendham (in Suffolk) gamekeeper says, that there is *more* poaching than ever under the new law."

—*Champion, November 24, 1839.*

"Then what is the principle of this Act, and what effects on the able-bodied did its framers contemplate? The principle was, that the paupers should in no case be eligible, unless they were more miserable than the lowest class who live on their labour. (Hear, hear.) He wondered what hon. members meant by

crying 'hear, hear!' He feared they had little idea of what the tendency of such a principle must be. What were the effects contemplated? First, conversion of paupers into independent labourers, and reduction of rates; second, rise of wages; third, the diminution of improvident marriages; fourth, increased content of labourers, and diminution of crime. But there were certain special effects in the eye of the original Poor-Law Commissioners. First, supplying a self-acting test of the merit of all claims; second, showing the requisite line of distinction between the class of independent labourers, and thereby checking the tendency to the indefinite extension of pauperism; then removing from the distributors all discretionary powers, and thereby diminishing abusive administration. Now, had the agency employed worked out the principle, and produced these effects? It was true, that the self-acting test had been adopted, and that the rates had been in some places greatly reduced by this New Law. It was true that the discretionary power had been taken away, but had wages risen? Had there been a return to content? Had crime been lessened by the New-Law? That was the question that called loudly for an answer. Upon the point of crime, what was said by Mr. Adey in his second report? In the second report of the Poor-Law Commissioners (1836) Mr. Adey quotes Mr. Sniche, of the Biggleswade Union, who says the act is working exceedingly well for all parties, and in confirmation says—'I challenge inquiry amongst the poor themselves, where, indeed, the inquiry ought to be made.' He then quotes from written testimonials of several of the principal occupiers of the Union; and of these one says—'I think they frequent the beer-shops as much or more than ever.' Another—'I am sorry to say that sheep-stealing and other depredations have been more prevalent since the system commenced than ever was known before.' Another—'They frequent the alehouse quite as much as ever. Poaching and other depredations have increased double to any former.' Another—'I do not feel able to answer as to their frequenting the alehouses, or as regards poaching, &c., as to any alteration.' Another—'The alehouses are, I think, more frequented than ever. I am not of opinion that poaching and other depredations have at all diminished, but that the greater crime of sheep-stealing has increased tenfold.' Another,



—‘I think poaching and other depredations have been quite as numerous and, sheep-stealing is spreading more every year.’—*Mr. Fielden, House of Commons*, February 20, 1838.

“The Commission for holding the assizes for the county of Dorset was opened on Saturday last. The calendar presented a very formidable and painful appearance. It contained not fewer than 80 prisoners.”—*Times*, March 10, 1841.

“The late numerous conflagrations, which there is too much reason to fear have been the work of incendiaries, have naturally excited the alarm of farmers and others in this neighbourhood. Desirous of effecting insurances on haystacks and other farming stock, they have found great difficulty in doing so. We have heard of several instances where the head offices have refused to insure—the risk being so great.”—*Halifax Guardian*, Jan. 2, 1841.

“He would beg of them to look at the country papers of last week, and they would see what were the opinions which the Duke of Devonshire and Earl of Ebrington entertained at the Quarter-sessions of Devonshire. These noblemen advocated the introduction of a rural police; and, in support of this recommendation, it was stated, that neither life nor property was safe in the present state of things. Why, the descriptions of outrage to which these noblemen alluded were not known in this country before the introduction of the New Poor-Law.”—*Mr. Bozer, at a Dinner given to the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, of St. George’s Southwark*, Oct. 24, 1839.

“Sheep-stealing is carried on to such an extent in the neighbourhood of Hungerford, that it is considered *useless* to offer any reward with a view to discover the offender or offenders.”—*Champion*, Feb. 2, 1840.

“The number of prisoners for trial at the Monmouth Assizes, amounted to nearly 90, and it is evident that crime is *greatly on the increase* in that county.”—*Hereford Journal*, March 31, 1841.

“During no previous period of the modern History of London have five cruel murders been committed within two years, without some of the perpetrators having been brought to justice.”—*Times*, May 18, 1840.

“LIVERPOOL ASSIZES.—The calendar is *heavy*, containing a list of 97 prisoners—seven are charged with the crime of murder, two with attempts to murder,

and one with aiding and abetting that crime; ten for manslaughter. There are seven cases of rape, eight for cutting and wounding, four for forgery, two for burglary, two for stealing letters, and four for conspiring to raise wages.”—*Times*, March 29, 1841.

“GLOUCESTER, April 1, 1841.—The calendar is *extremely heavy*, there being 117 prisoners for trial, a large proportion of whom are charged with serious offences. Indeed, there is hardly a crime, known to the common or statute law, which does not find a place in this calendar. There are seven prisoners charged with murder; one with wounding with intent to murder; one with rape; two with unnatural offences; one with stabbing; five with manslaughter; eight with burglary; ten with horse-stealing; ten with sheep-stealing; two with forgery; six with highway robbery, &c.”—*Times*, April 3, 1841.

“CHESTER, April 1, 1841.—The calendar comprises between 70 and 80 prisoners; eight of whom are for murder, and a great portion of the offences are of grave and heinous character; in fact, the calendar, whether in point of number or gravity, is *without its parallel* in this county.”—*Ibid.*

“NORWICH, April 3, 1841.—The Commission of Assize for the county of Norfolk was opened with the accustomed formalities this evening, and on Monday, the active duties of the learned judges will commence at 10 o’clock. The calendar is marked by *crimes of a very deep dye*, including two cases of alleged infanticide, six of burglary, three of highway robbery, four of malicious stabbing with intent to do grievous bodily harm, one of forgery, a case of rape, and two of a capital charge, from which the calendars of this country are, unhappily, never free. Six men are, also, charged under the Night Poaching Act, with being in certain preserves at night, armed for the destruction of game; this number is greatly below the average for this county. The Magistrates, at the adjourned Sessions last week, tried a most formidable list of petty larcenies, and only one case of that class of offences appears in the assize calendar.”—*Times*, April 6, 1841.

“STAFFORD.—The Commission was opened on Wednesday before Mr. Justice Coleridge. The calendar contained the names of 115 prisoners, most of whom are charged with offences of the most serious nature. There were for trial—for murder, four; maliciously wounding,

eleven; manslaughter, three; rape, ten, (seven in only one indictment); house-breaking, seventeen; highway robbery, fifteen; sheep-stealing, nine; horse and cattle-stealing, five."—*Hereford Journal*, March 17, 1841.

"He was exceedingly sorry to inform them, that the calendar of prisoners was *heavy*, considering the short time which had elapsed since the Assizes—only one week—during which time, nine prisoners had been entered in the calendar, eight of whom were to be tried."—*Mr. Barneby, M.P.'s Charge at the Herefordshire Sessions, April 5, 1841.*

"At the Brecknockshire Sessions, the Chairman said, that crime had *increased very rapidly* in that county."—*Hereford Journal*, April 14, 1841.

"Although the Sessions were so recently held for this county (Bucks), the criminal calendar presents a *fearful list* of between fifty and sixty prisoners for trial." —*Times*, March 11, 1841.

“Some rascals have recently paid nocturnal visits to the potato-fields in the parish of Hucknall Torkard.—*Nottingham Review*.—[Better feed them than call them *rascals*. There was a time when Englishmen, so far from stealing potatoes, would not eat them. Besides the above, the *Nottingham Review* contains nine cases of stealing food, or taking game.]”—*Champion*, Oct. 6, 1839.

“EFFECTS OF THE NEW POOR-LAW.—Chesterfield, and its neighbourhood, feel the effect of the New Poor-Law: robberies are so frequent that an extra watchman is appointed for the above borough. The law has driven thousands to vagrancy; the refusing temporary relief to the honest, deserving, able-bodied labourer, doomed him to perpetual pauperism, removing him from respectable society, and sooner than enter the Bastille, compelled to dismantle his home of that furniture for subsistence, which once cheered and made his fireside happy;—but that once-considered Englishman’s pride and comfort, is now fast fading away. The infernal clauses relating to bastardy will not bear reflection, causing murders to a fearful extent.”—*Sheffield Iris*, May 17, 1841.

"I am sorry to observe, by the calendar before me, that there are no fewer than 102 prisoners for trial."—*The Chairman's Charge, Somersetshire Quarter-Sessions, March 29, 1841*

"At the last Borough Sessions, the number of prisoners for trial was *greater*

than was ever known before at Leeds."—*Leeds Intelligencer*, Dec. 26, 1840.

"The Bath gaol is so full of prisoners that room cannot be found for more without some additional accommodation. More than sixty prisoners are already confined there for trial; and if the number of cases of felony go on in the same ratio till the next Quarter-Sessions, the Recorder will have to sit double the usual time."—*Bristol Mirror*, Feb. 27, 1841.

“He believed that the case to which he alluded was not the only case of the kind which might become the subject of their inquiry. He believed that the noble Lord (John Russell) was aware of the existence of another case of the same description. There had been abominations practised in the workhouse of Ampthill (Beds), of the most horrible description. He had been told that the porter at that workhouse had made it a place for the corrupting of the male youth of the county. Several youths had been spoken of as the objects of this man's wicked attempts. It appeared that one youth had been committed to gaol, perhaps to be tried for his life, on the charge of having inflicted severe wounds upon the person of this porter; but, if report spoke true, it would appear also, that the conduct of this porter towards the same youth, had been such as to make the porter liable to be tried for a capital offence.”—*Mr. Fielden's Speech, House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1838.*

“As poverty, under the new order of things, is esteemed a crime, that, too, has *materially increased*, as *vide* the following statistic from the *Champion*, Nov. 10, 1839:—

“ PERSONS RELIEVED IN THE PARISH OF  
MARYLEBONE.

	Number Relieved.
" Year ending Nov. 1, 1837 .....	3,359
" " _____ 1838 .....	3,419
" " _____ 1839 .....	3,924.' "

“ I have learnt by inquiry of the gaoler here (*Bath*), that at the Session before the last, the number of prisoners was very *much increased*, being 75, a number unknown before the passing of the New Poor-Law. He also informed me, that crime in the county he knows to have *considerably increased*, as may be seen by county returns.”—*Contributed by the Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath)*, Oct. 9, 1840.

"Though Mr. Edwin Chadwick, in his character as *Secretary to the Poor-Law Commissioners*, has frequently boasted that the administration of the 'Act' has



caused a *decrease of crime*; yet in his other official capacity, as *Constabulary Force Commissioner*, he admits that *crime has greatly increased* within these two or three years!"—*Vide First Report of the Constabulary Force Commission.*—G. R. W. B.

"The Recorder regretted to state, that at the last Sessions, there was an *unusually large number* of prisoners, and at these Sessions, there was an *unusually large number also*, there being upwards of 60 prisoners, who will have to answer charges for offences committed since the last Sessions, and this during the summer quarter, when we do not usually find so large a number of offences committed. *It is clear, that of late crime has increased with great rapidity.*"—*The Address of D. Jardine, Esq., Recorder of Bath, Michaelmas Sessions, 1840.*

"The comparative number of commitments to the Petworth prison from Michaelmas, 1838, to Michaelmas, 1839, to Michaelmas, 1840, showing the increase or decrease of offences charged against the prisoners during those periods, and exhibiting an *increase* in the years 1839 and 1840 over 1838 and 1839, of seventeen western prisoners, which was more than accounted for in the *increase of vagrants*, of whom there were thirty, being about one-third more than in the preceding year."—*Sussex Agricultural Express*, Oct. 31, 1840.

"Infanticide has become *awfully prevalent*, and to the same detested cause may be ascribed the increased number of unnatural crimes."—"Moraviensis," in the "*Weekly Dispatch*," April 29, 1838.

"Since the last General Quarter-Sessions of the Peace for this county, the number of prisoners liberated from the House of Correction, at Knutsford, is 471, a number, we believe, *exceeding, by at least one hundred*, any previous gaol delivery within the same period of time."—*Macclesfield Courier*, Oct. 24, 1840.

"Unnatural offences—in these there is an *increase*. There has been a *considerable increase* in sheep-stealing, and larceny by servants."—*Companion to the Almanac*, 1838.

"Comparing the number of criminals in 1837 with the average of the preceding years, the *increase* in 1837 is 2,224 persons, or 10.4 per cent. If these general results are examined in detail, it will be found, that an increase has taken place in 33 English counties, and in both North and South Wales. In eight counties, it

has *exceeded 30 per cent.*; in nine counties, *between 20 and 30 per cent.*; and in ten counties, it has been *between 10 and 20 per cent.*"—*Companion to the Almanac*, 1839.

[From the *Companion to the Almanac* for 1840.]

Sheep Stealing.	Convicted.
1818 .....	177
1828 .....	120
1838 .....	225
Larceny in a Dwelling-house.	Convicted.
1828 .....	74
1838 .....	121
Larceny by Servants.	Convicted.
1831 .....	655
1838 .....	854
Simple Larceny.	Convicted.
1831 .....	8,959
1838 .....	10,057
Embezzlement.	Convicted.
1831 .....	186
1838 .....	210

#### Rape.

	1818	1828	1838
Sentenced to Death ..	2	5	7
Executed .....	1	3	

#### Murder.

	1818	1828	1838
Sentenced to Death ..	13	20	25
Executed .....	13	18	5

#### CRIMINAL TABLE OF COMMITMENTS.

In 1834 .....	22,451
1835 .....	20,731
1836 .....	20,984
1837 .....	23,612
1838 .....	23,094

#### INCREASE OF CRIME IN 1839.

Offences against the person, 8.1 increase per cent.

Offences against property committed with violence, 9.8 increase per cent.

Forgery and offences against the currency, 10.3 increase per cent.

#### Transported or imprisoned.

	1834	1835	1836	1837	1838
Transportation for 14 years ...	668	554	585	479	708
For 10 years ..	..	..	..	179	880
For 7 years ..	2,501	2,325	2,249	2,413	..
Imprisonment for 3 years and above 2 yrs.	6	11	1	14	25
For 2 years and above	308	290	285	394	393
For 1 year and above	..	..	..	..	..
6 months ..	1,582	1,543	1,455	1,628	1,713
For 6 months and under.	8,825	8,071	8,384	10,258	10,262

"In Northamptonshire, crime has *increased 59 per cent.*; in Staffordshire, 43; in Cornwall, 42; Leicestershire, 39; Wilts, 36; Bucks, 34; Dorsetshire, 33; Berks, 32; Somersetshire, 29; Monmouthshire, 28; Devonshire, 27; Worcestershire, 25; Westmoreland, 25; Lancashire, 24; Durham, 23; Essex, 21; Herefordshire, 21; Derbyshire, 18; Southampton, 12; Rutlandshire, 12; Cheshire, 11; Northumberland, 11; Oxfordshire, 11; Salop, 11; Sussex, 10; Yorkshire, 10; Gloucestershire, 10."—*Ibid.*

"Deny it who may, we adhere inflexibly to the opinion, that it is the direct tendency of the New Poor-Law to augment the number of juvenile offenders. Destitute artisans, with large families, who can neither obtain immediate bread, nor brook the frightful alternative of selling their furniture, and encountering the horrors of a Whig workhouse, are inevitably driven to the necessity, if not of

committing such systematic pilferings themselves, as might expose them to the risk of imprisonment, at least, of inciting their children to venture forth upon larcenous adventures, in the hope that, while thereby bringing home a certain portion of plunder, the chances of impunity, in the event of detection, will be greatly enhanced by the tender age of the delinquents, and the relative hardships of their case. It is found, accordingly, that petty thefts committed by infant banditti, whose ages range from 9 to 14, are *prodigiously on the increase*. This fact alone, established as it is by the criminal returns throughout the districts where the New Poor-Law happens to be in fiercest operation, might surely suggest to our philanthropic *Solons* the possibility of there being some such connexion as that of cause and effect between the barbarities of their favourite code, and the increase of youthful depredations."—*Times*, Aug. 21, 1840.



## NEW POOR-LAW PARLIAMENTARY DIVISIONS.

April 17, 1834, Second Reading of the New Poor-Laws' Bill—House of Commons.  
Ayes, 319; Noes, 20; Majority, 299.

June 9, 1834, The Minority of 31, Tellers included, who voted for Mr. Jervis's Amendment, to leave out that part of the 33d clause of the Poor-Laws' Amendment-Bill, which gives to landlords the right of voting by proxy. Ayes, 31; Noes, 125; Majority, 94.

### THE MINORITY.

Aglionby, H. A.	Collier, J.	Humphrey, J.	Tennyson, Hon. C.
Attwood, T.	Ewart, W.	Jervis, J.	Thicknesse, R.
Baines, E.	Faithful, G.	Lalor, P.	Vigors, N. A.
Beauclerk, Major	Fielden, J.	Lister, E. C.	Wallace, T.
Bewes, T.	Fryer, R.	Maddocks, J.	Williams, W.
Brotherton, J.	Hawes, B.	Oswald, R. A.	Wilbraham, G.
Buller, E.	Heathcoat, —	Robinson, G. R.	Wood, Alderman.
Clay, W.	Hume, J.	Scholefield, J.	

June 9, 1834, Minority of 36, Teller included, who voted that the absentee owner should not have the power of giving six votes by proxy, while the rate-paying tenant should only give one vote. Ayes, 36; Noes, 128; Majority, 92.

### THE MINORITY.

Aglionby, H. A.	Evans, Col.	Kennedy, J.	Tancred, H. W.
Attwood, T.	Faithful, G.	Lalor, P.	Tennyson, Hon. C.
Baines, E.	Fielden, J.	Langston, J. H.	Thicknesse, R.
Briggs, R.	Fryer, R.	Lister, E. C.	Vigors, N. A.
Beauclerk, Major	Gaskell, D.	Oswald, R. A.	Wason, R.
Brocklehurst, J.	Hawes, B.	O'Brien, C.	TELLER.
Brotherton, J.	Hume, J.	Phillips, M.	Torrens, Col.
Clay, W.	Heathcoat, J.	Poulter, J. S.	
Ewart, W.	Humphrey, J.	Robinson, G. R.	
Evans, G.	Jervis, J.	Scholefield, J.	

June 9, 1834, Minority of 10, Tellers included, who voted for Mr. Cobbett's Amendment:—"That before this House proceed further with the Poor-Laws' Amendment-Bill, it appoint a select committee to inquire into the causes of the great increase in the amount of the poor-rates in England and Wales; and also, that the instructions given to the barrister who drew the Bill be laid upon the table of the House."

Cobbett, W.	Faithful, G.	Godson, R.	Scholefield, J.
Egerton, W.	Fielden, J.	Hodges, T. L.	SHUT OUT.
Evans, Col.	Finn, W.	Robinson, G.	Attwood, T.

June 10, 1834, Minority of 41, Teller included, who voted that the Commissioners should not have the power to prohibit the Guardians from giving relief out of the workhouse to the aged, sick, and infirm poor; or to any widow unable wholly to maintain herself and children. Ayes, 41; Noes, 148; Majority 107.

### THE MINORITY.

Attwood, T.	Davenport, J.	Fenton, J.	Langston, J. H.
Bennett, J.	Duncombe, Hon. W.	Gaskell, D.	Mills, J.
Bethell, R.	Egerton, W. T.	Godson, R.	O'Connor, F.
Briscoe, J. I.	Fancourt, Major	Halcomb, J.	Price, R.
Brotherton, J.	Faithful, G.	Hardy, J.	Robinson, G. R.
Collier, J.	Feilden, W.	Hodges, T. L.	Scholefield, J.
Cripps, J.	Fielden, J.	Irton, S.	Slaney, R. A.

Thicknesse, R.	Walker, R.	Wilbraham, G.	TELLER.
Throckmorton, R.	Wallace, R.	Wilks, J.	Scrope, P.
Tower, C. T.	Walsh, Sir J.	Willoughby, Sir H.	
Vernon, G. H.	Walter, J.	Williams, Col.	

June 12, 1834, the House resolved itself into a committee on the Poor-Laws' Amendment-Bill, and resumed the debate on the 45th clause. Mr. Cobbett's amendment, the object of which was, to prevent the separation of married paupers, the wearing of workhouse dresses, &c., after considerable discussion, was negatived by a majority of 128 to 17.

June 13, 1834, Minority of 25, who voted, that the word "exclusively" be omitted in clause 48 of the Poor-Laws' Amendment-Bill, whereby the poor would have been enabled to apply to justices for orders for relief during the intervals when the vestry or Guardians were not sitting.—Ayes, 25; Noes, 129; Majority, 104.

THE MINORITY.

Astley, Sir J.	Durham, Sir P.	Knatchbull, Sir E.	Vivyan, Sir R.
Attwood, T.	Finn, W. F.	O'Connell, M.	Williams, Col.
Baines, E.	Freemantle, Sir T.	Scholefield, J.	Willoughby, Sir H.
Bennett, J.	Godson, R.	Slaney, R. A.	Wood, Col.
Blackstone, W. S.	Hammer, Sir J.	Thicknesse, R.	TELLER.
Butler, Col.	Hodges, T. L.	Tower, C. T.	Scrope, P.
Cobbett, W.	Jacob, E.	Tyrrell, Sir J.	

June 18, 1834, Minority of 29, Teller included, who voted in favour of the motion of Mr. Jervis, "That the Commissioners and Justices should not be permitted to plead the general issue, and give the special matter in evidence."

Aglionby, H. A.	Hughes, H.	O'Brien, C.	Thompson, Ald.
Attwood, T.	Halcomb, J.	Pryme, G.	Vigors, N.
Briscoe, J.	Jacob, E.	Potter, R.	Willoughby, Sir H.
Blackstone, W. S.	Irton, S.	Peter, W.	Young, G. F.
Blamire, W.	Ingham, R.	Robinson, G.	TELLER.
Bethell, R.	Lloyd, J. H.	Stanley, E.	Jervis, J.
Ewart, W.	O'Connell, J.	Scholefield, J.	
Finn, W. F.	O'Connell, M.	Tower, C. T.	

June 20, 1834, Minority of 33, Teller included, who voted for expunging the 69th and three following clauses relating to bastardy in the Poor Laws' Amendment-Bill.

Brotherton, J.	Halcomb, J.	O'Connor, F.	Tennyson, Right
Buckingham, J. S.	Handley, H.	O'Dwyer, A. C.	Hon. C.
Buller, C.	Hardy, J.	Ruthven, E. S.	Torrens, Col.
Cobbett, W.	Heathcoat, J.	Ruthven, E.	Tyrrell, Sir J.
Davenport, J.	Hughes, H.	Rider, T.	Vigors, N. A.
Fenton, J.	Hodges, T. L.	Stuart, Lord D.	Walter, J.
Fielden, J.	Jacob, E.	Scholefield, J.	Young, G. F.
Finn, W. F.	Jervis, J.	Shawe, R. N.	
Gully, J.	Lloyd, J. H.	Strutt, E.	

June 20, 1834, Minority of 18, Teller included, who voted for Mr. Cobbett's Amendment to clause 73 of the Poor-Laws' Amendment-Bill.

Blake, M. J.	Finn, W. F.	Maxwell, J.	O'Brien, C.
Buckingham, J. S.	Gaskell, D.	O'Connor, F.	Ruthven, E.
Butler, Col.	Gully, J.	O'Connell, D.	Thompson, Alderman.
Cobbett, W.	Hodges, T. L.	O'Connell, M.	
Fielden, J.	Heathcoat, J.	O'Connell, J.	

July 1, 1834, Minority of 52, Tellers included, who voted, against the third reading of the New Poor-Laws' Bill, House of Commons.—Ayes, 187; Noes, 52; Majority, 135.



## THE MINORITY.

Attwood, M.	Fitzsimon, C.	O'Connell, M.	Vigers, N. A.
Attwood, T.	Fryer, R.	O'Connell, M.	Vivyan, Sir R.
Bainbridge, E.	Guise, Sir W.	O'Connell, J.	Walter, J.
Baines, E.	Gully, J.	Parker, Sir H.	Whalley, Sir S.
Baring, H.	Halcomb, J.	Potter, R.	Williams, Col.
Blackstone, W.	Halse, J.	Rider, T.	Willoughby, Sir H.
Brotherton, J.	Hardy, J.	Robinson, G. R.	Wilks, J.
Burrell, Sir C.	Hughes, W. H.	Ruthven, E.	Young, G. F.
Cobbett, W.	Humphrey, J.	Scholefield, J.	TELLERS.
Duffield, T.	Kennedy, J.	Somerset, Lord G.	Bennett, J.
Duncombe, Hon. W.	Leech, J.	Spry, Sir S. T.	Hodges, T. L.
Egerton, W. T.	Lister, E. C.	Stanley, E.	PAIRED OFF.
Faithful, G.	Lowther, Col.	Thicknesse, R.	Tennyson, Right
Fielden, J.	O'Connell, D.	Tower, C.	Hon. D.

July 21, 1834, second reading of the New Poor-Laws' Bill, House of Lords, Ayes, 76; Noes, 13; Majority, 63.

July 28, 1834, the Bishop of Exeter moved, in the House of Lords, to substitute for the leading enactment of the Bastardy clause the following provision:—"That the father and mother of an illegitimate child, or the survivors of them, shall be required to support such child, and that no parish shall be bound to support such child whilst either parent is able to do so; and that all relief occasioned by the wants of such child shall be considered as relief afforded to the father and mother, or the survivor of them.—Ayes, 34; Noes, 38; Majority, 4.

August 8, 1834, third reading of the New Poor-Laws' Bill, House of Lords, Ayes, 45; Noes, 15; Majority, 30.

Feb. 20, 1838, Mr. Fielden's motion for the repeal of the New Poor-Law.—Ayes, 17; Noes, 309; Majority, 292.

## THE MINORITY.

Attwood, M.	Feilden, W.	Lewis, W.	Williams, W.
Attwood, T.	Grimsditch, T.	Martin, J.	Wilberforce, W.
Burr, H.	Hawkes, T.	Parker, R. T.	TELLERS.
D'Israeli, B.	Johnson, Genl.	Sibthorp, Col.	Fielden, J.
Dungannon, Visct.	Jones, J.	Turner, W.	Wakley, T.

April 30, 1838, the third reading of the Irish Poor-Law, House of Commons, Ayes, 234; Noes, 59; Majority, 175.

July 21, 1840, Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question (17th July) "That the Bill (Poor-Law Commission) be now read the third time."—Question again proposed—"Debate resumed—Amendment proposed, to leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the question, to add the words 'upon this day three months.' Question put, 'That the word 'now' stand part of the question.'—Ayes, 74; Noes, 16; Majority, 58.

Attwood, M.	Duncombe, T.	Irtton, S.	Williams, W.
Bainbridge, E. T.	Fielden, J.	Johnson, Genl.	TELLERS.
Brotherton, J.	Gore, O. J. R.	Muntz, G. F.	Attwood, W.
Collins, W.	Grant, Sir A. C.	Parker, R. T.	Grimsditch, T.
Douglas, Sir C. E.	Hindley, C.	Sibthorp, Col.	

Feb. 8, 1841, second reading of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act Amendment-Bill, or, Poor-Law Commissioners Ten Years' Continuance-Bill.—Ayes, 201; Noes, 54; Majority, 147.

Archdall, M.	Baldwin, C. B.	Blackstone, W. S.	Brotherton, J.
Attwood, W.	Bell, M.	Broadwood, H.	Brownrigg, S.

Burr, H.	Fielden, J.	Hodgson, R.	Richards, R.
Copeland, Ald.	Fitzroy, Hon. H.	Irton, S.	Rushout, G.
Dalrymple, Sir A.	Godson, R.	Jervis, J.	Sibthorp, Col.
Dick, Q.	Gore, O. J. R.	Johnson, Genl.	Spry, Sir S. T.
Douglas, Sir C. E.	Goring, H. D.	Leader, J. T.	Shirley, E.
Duke, Sir J.	Grimsditch, T.	Liddell, Hon. H. T.	Thompson, Ald.
Duncombe, T.	Halford, H.	Money Penny, T. G.	Williams, W.
Duncombe, Hon. W.	Hawkes, T.	Muntz, G. F.	TELLERS.
Duncombe, Hon. A.	Heathcoat, J.	O'Connell, D.	D'Israeli, B.
Egerton, W. T.	Hinde, J. H.	O'Connell, J.	Wakley, T.
Etwall, R.	Hindley, C.	Pechell, Capt.	
Evans, Sir De L.	Hodges, T. L.	Pigot, R.	
Feilden, W.	Hodgson, F.	Polhill, F.	

N.B. Among the majority were, Buller, Sir J. Y. ; Clive, Hon. R. H. ; Darby, G. ; Goulburn, Right Hon. H. ; Graham, Sir J. ; Grote, G. ; Hume, J. ; Inglis, Sir R. H. ; Knatchbull, Sir E. ; Lascelles, Hon. W. S. ; Peel, Sir R. ; Sandon, Lord ; Shaw, Right Hon. F. ; Somerset, Lord G. ; Stanley, Lord ; Strickland, Sir G. ; Talfour, Serjeant ; Teignmouth, Lord ; &c. *Absent, Sir F. Burdett.*

March 19, 1841, Poor-Law Amendment-Bill. Motion made, and question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair." Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "That" to the end of the question, in order to add the words, "this House will, upon this day six months, resolve itself into the said Committee," instead thereof. Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question."—Ayes, 247 ; Noes, 51 ; Majority, 196.

THE MINORITY.

Archdall, M.	Duncombe, Hon. W.	Hodgson, R.	Scholefield, J.
Attwood, W.	Duncombe, Hon. A.	Houldsworth, T.	Sibthorp, Col.
Attwood, M.	Egerton, W. T.	Hurt, F.	Stanley, E.
Baillie, Col.	Evans, Sir De L.	Irton, S.	Thompson, Ald.
Bell, M.	Fielden, J.	James, Sir W. C.	Wakley, T.
Blackstone, W. S.	Fector, J. M.	Johnson, Genl.	Walker, R.
Bradshaw, J.	Fleetwood, Sir P. H.	Leader, J. T.	Wilbraham, Hon. B.
Broadwood, H.	Gore, O. J. R.	Marton, G.	Williams, T. P.
Brotherton, J.	Halford, H.	Miller, W. H.	Williams, W.
Bryan, G.	Hall, Sir B.	Palmer, G.	TELLERS.
Collins, W.	Hinde, J. H.	Pechell, Capt.	Parker, R. T.
Copeland, Ald.	Hindley, C.	Planta, Rt. Hon. J.	Grimsditch, T.
Dick, Q.	Hodges, T. L.	Polhill, F.	
Duncombe, T.	Hodgson, F.	Richards, R.	

N.B. Among those who voted in the majority, were Lord Ashley ; C. B. Baldwin ; Sir J. Y. Buller ; H. Burr ; Sir G. Crewe ; G. Darby ; Sir C. E. Douglas ; Viscount Eastnor ; Lord F. Egerton ; Right Hon. H. Goulburn ; Sir James Graham ; J. Hume ; Sir R. W. Inglis ; J. Jones ; Sir E. Knatchbull ; Hon. W. S. Lascelles ; Sir W. Molesworth ; O. Morgan ; J. S. Packington ; Sir R. Peel ; Col. Rolleston ; Lord G. Somerset ; Lord Teignmouth. *Absent, Sir F. Burdett.*

March 19, 1841, Poor-Law Amendment-Bill (in the Committee). First clause (Poor-Law Commissioners and every Assistant-Commissioner continued). Amendment proposed, to leave out the words, "every Commissioner." Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause." The Committee divided—Ayes, 191 ; Noes, 46 ; Majority, 155.

THE MINORITY.

Archdall, M.	Brocklehurst, J.	Duncombe, T.	Gore, O. J. R.
Attwood, W.	Buck, L. W.	Duncombe, Hon. W.	Grant, Sir A. C.
Bailey, J.	Codrington, C. W.	Duncombe, Hon. A.	Grimsditch, T.
Baillie, Col.	Collins, W.	Easthope, J.	Halford, H.
Baldwin, C. B.	Copeland, Ald.	Ellis, W.	Hawkes, T.
Blackstone, W. S.	D'Israeli, B.	Evans, Sir De L.	Henniker, Lord
Broadwood, H.	Douglas, Sir C. E.	Fielden, J.	Hinde, J. H.



Hodges, T. L.	Leader, J. T.	Pechell, Capt.	Wakley, T.
Hodgson, F.	Lowther, J. H.	Polhill, F.	Williams, W.
Hodgson, R.	Neeld, J.	Scarlett, Hon. J. Y.	TELLERS.
Hollond, R.	Peecke, C. W.	Scholefield, J.	Sibthorp, Col.
Johnson, Genl.	Parker, R. T.	Smyth, Sir G. H.	Mackenzie, W. F.
Jones, J.			

N.B. Among those who voted in the majority, were J. Brotherton; Sir E. Filmer; Right Hon. H. Goulburn; Sir J. Graham; C. Hindley; G. Grote; J. Hume; J. Bailey, Jun.; Sir J. Y. Buller; G. Darby; Sir R. H. Inglis; Hon. W. S. Lascelles; J. S. Packington; Sir R. Peel; Col. Rolleston; Lord G. Somerset; E. Strutt; B. Wilbraham; Col. Wood. *Absent, Sir F. Burdett.*

March 22, 1841, Poor-Law Amendment-Bill (in Committee). First clause, (Poor-Law Commissioners and every Assistant-Commissioner, Secretary, and other officer and person duly appointed by the Poor-Law Commissioners, empowered to hold office, and exercise the powers thereof, until the 31st of December, in the year "1846.") Amendment proposed, to leave out the words "one thousand eight hundred and forty-six," in order to insert the words "one thousand eight hundred and forty-three." Question put, "That the words one thousand eight hundred and forty-six stand part of the clause." The Committee divided—Ayes, 174; Noes, 135; Majority, 39.

Ainsworth, P.	Duncombe, Hon. W.	Houldsworth, T.	Rushbrooke, Col.
Archdall, M.	Dundas, C. W. D.	Hurt, F.	Rushout, G.
Attwood, W.	Eastnor, Lord	Irton, S.	Sanderson, R.
Bailey, J.	Eaton, R. J.	Jervis, S.	Scarlett, Hon. J. Y.
Bailey, J. Jun.	Egerton, W. T.	Johnson, Genl.	Scholefield, J.
Baillie, Col.	Ellis, W.	Jones, J.	Sheppard, T.
Bainbridge, E. T.	Evans, Sir De L.	Kemble, H.	Sibthorp, Col.
Baldwin, C. B.	Farnham, E. B.	Knatchbull, Sir E.	Smith, G. R.
Bell, M.	Feilden, W.	Law, Hon. C. E.	Smyth, Sir G. H.
Blackstone, W. S.	Fielden, J.	Leader, J. T.	Smythe, Hon. G.
Boldero, H. G.	Fellowes, E.	Lowther, J. H.	Spry, Sir S. T.
Broadley, H.	Filmer, Sir E.	Mackenzie, T.	Stanley, E.
Broadwood, H.	Fitzroy, Hon. H.	Mackenzie, W. F.	Strickland, Sir G.
Brocklehurst, J.	Fleetwood, Sir P. H.	Mahon, Lord	Tancred, H. W.
Brownrigg, S.	Forrester, Hon. G.	Marton, G.	Trotter, J.
Brotherton, J.	Fox, S. L.	Maunsell, T. P.	Turner, E.
Browne, R. D.	Gaskell, J. M.	Money Penny, T. G.	Turner, W.
Bruges, W. H. L.	Gore, O. J. R.	Morris, D.	Vere, Sir C. B.
Buck, L. W.	Grant, Sir A. C.	Muntz, G. F.	Vivian, J. E.
Buller, Sir J. Y.	Grimsditch, T.	Owen, Sir J.	Waddington, H. S.
Burroughes, H. N.	Guest, Sir J.	Packe, C. W.	Walker, R.
Canning, Rt. Hon.	Halford, H.	Palmer, R.	Wilbraham, G.
Sir S.	Hall, Sir B.	Palmer, G.	Wilbraham, Hon. B.
Cholmondeley, Hon.	Hamilton, C. J. B.	Parker, R. T.	Williams, W.
H.	Hamilton, Lord C.	Pechell, Capt.	Wilmot, Sir J. E.
Chute, W. L. W.	Hawkes, T.	Pigot, R.	Wodehouse, E.
Collins, W.	Hector, C. J.	Polhill, F.	Wood, Col.
Courtenay, P.	Henniker, Lord	Pollen, Sir J. W.	Wood, B.
Crewe, Sir G.	Hinde, J. H.	Pollock, Sir F.	Wynn, Right Hon.
Darby, G.	Hindley, C.	Powell, Col.	C. W.
Dashwood, G. H.	Hodges, T. L.	Praed, W. T.	Yorke, Hon. E. T.
Dick, Q.	Hodgson, F.	Rae, Right Hon.	TELLERS.
D'Israeli, B.	Hodgson, R.	Sir W.	Easthope, J.
Douglas, Sir C. E.	Hollond, R.	Richards, R.	Wakley, T.
Dugdale, W. S.	Hope, G. W.	Rolleston, Col.	
Duncombe, T.	Hotham, Lord	Round, J.	

Among the majority were, Sir A. Dalrymple; Lord F. Egerton; Right Hon. H. Goulburn; Sir J. Graham; G. Grote; J. Hume; Sir W. Molesworth; Sir R. Peel; Lord G. Somerset; E. Strutt; Lord Teignmouth; Col. Wood. *Absent, Sir F. Burdett*; H. Burr; and shut out, W. Bolling and Alderman Copeland.

March 26, 1841, Poor-Law Amendment-Bill (in the Committee). Fourth clause (that every rule, order, or regulation, of the Poor-Law Commissioners, which shall be issued, and shall apply to a class of cases, or to a series or succession of occasions, shall be deemed to be a general rule, and that every such rule, order, or regulation, which shall apply only to a single case, or a single occasion, shall be deemed a particular order); Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "every," in order to insert the word "no." Question put, "That the word 'every' stand part of the clause." The Committee divided—Ayes, 225; Noes, 75; Majority, 150.

Ainsworth, P.	Darlington, Earl of	Hodgson, F.	Richards, R.
Attwood, W.	Dick, Q.	Holland, R.	Round, J.
Bailey, J. Jun.	D'Israeli, B.	Houldsworth, T.	Rushout, G.
Baillie, Col.	Easthope, J.	Humphrey, J.	Sanderson, R.
Bainbridge, E. T.	Eaton, R. J.	Irton, S.	Scarlett, Hon. J. Y.
Bell, M.	Egerton, W. T.	Johnson, Genl.	Scholefield, J.
Blackstone, W. S.	Ellis, W.	Leader, J. T.	Sibthorp, Col.
Boldero, H. G.	Evans, Sir De L.	Lowther, J. H.	Smyth, Sir G. H.
Bolling, W.	Farnham, E. B.	Lygon, Hon. Genl.	Spry, Sir S. T.
Broadwood, H.	Fielden, J.	Mackenzie, W. F.	Stanley, E.
Brooklehurst, J.	Fitzroy, Hon. H.	Martin, G.	Turner, W.
Brotherton, J.	Fleetwood, Sir P. H.	Miller, W. H.	Vivian, J. E.
Buck, L. W.	Gore, O. J. R.	Muntz, G. F.	Wakley, T.
Buller, Sir J. Y.	Goring, H. D.	O'Brien, W. S.	Wilbraham, Hon. B.
Burr, H.	Grant, Sir A. C.	Owen, Sir J.	Williams, R.
Burroughes, H. N.	Grimsditch, T.	Palmer, R.	TELLERS.
Collins, W.	Halford, H.	Palmer, G.	Hinde, H.
Copeland, Ald.	Hamilton, C. J. B.	Parker, R. T.	Duncombe, Hon. W.
Courtenay, P.	Hawkes, T.	Pechell, Capt.	
Crewe, Sir G.	Hodges, T. L.	Polhill, F.	

N.B. Among the majority were, Aglionby, H. A.; Bailey, J.; Baldwin, C. B.; Darby, G.; Douro, Marquis; Eastnor, Lord; Egerton, Lord F.; Filmer, Sir E.; Goulburn, Right Hon. H.; Grote, G.; Hume, J.; Inglis, Sir R. H.; Knatchbull, Sir E.; Morgan, O.; Peel, Sir R.; Rolleston, Col.; Sandon, Lord; Shaw, Right Hon. F.; Somerset, Lord G.; Teignmouth, Lord; Wood, Col. *Absent, Sir F. Burdett.*

March 29, 1841, Poor-Law Amendment-Bill. Order for Committee read. Motion made, and question put, "That it be an instruction to the Committee, that they have power to make provision to repeal the Poor-Law Amendment-Act." (Mr. J. Fielden's motion). The House divided—Ayes, 9; Noes, 155; Majority, 146.

Attwood, W.	Hawkes, T.	Sibthorp, Col.	TELLERS.
Brotherton, J.	Muntz, G. F.	Smyth, Sir G. H.	Fielden, J.
Etwall, R.	Parker, R. T.	Wakley, T.	Johnson, Genl.

N.B. Among the majority were, Aglionby, H. A.; Bailey, J.; Baldwin, C. B.; Burn, H.; Dalrymple, Sir A.; Darby, G.; Douglas, Sir C. E.; Feilden, W.; Goulburn, Right Hon. H.; Grote, G.; Halford, H.; Hotham, Lord; Inglis, Sir R. H.; Lascelles, Hon. W. S.; Molesworth, Sir W.; Morgan, O.; Pechell, Capt.; Peel, Sir R.; Rushbrooke, Col.; Sandon, Lord; Somerset, Lord G.; Stanley, Lord; Strutt, E.; Trevor, Hon. G. R.; Wynn, Right Hon. C. W. *Absent, Sir F. Burdett.*

March 30, 1841, Poor-Law Amendment-Bill. (In the Committee.) Motion made, and question put, "That the Chairman do report progress, and ask leave to sit again." The Committee divided—Ayes, 18; Noes, 109; Majority, 89.

Brotherton, J.	Fort, J.	Mackenzie, W. F.	TELLERS.
Buller, Sir J. Y.	Freshfield, J. W.	Muntz, G. F.	Sibthorp, Col.
Douglas, Sir C. E.	Grimsditch, T.	Packington, J. S.	Fielden, J.
Egerton, W. T.	Johnson, Genl.	Parker, R. T.	
Etwall, R.	Kemble, H.	Somerset, Lord G.	
Fitzroy, Hon. H.	Lowther, J. H.	Wilbraham, G.	



N.B. Among the majority were, Aglionby, H. A.; Bolling, W.; Brocklehurst, J.; Darby, G.; Filmer, Sir E.; Goulburn, Right Hon. H.; Grote, G.; Lascelles, Hon. W. S.; Morgan, O.; Pechell, Capt.; Peel, Sir R.; Rushbrooke, Col.; Wood, Col. *Absent, Sir F. Burdett.*

April 1, 1841, Poor-Law Amendment-Bill. (In the Committee.) Twenty-second clause (in addition to the sum of money which Guardians are empowered to raise or borrow, for the purpose of purchasing, hiring, building, enlarging, or altering work-houses, the Guardians of any parish situated within the Metropolitan Police district, may also raise or borrow such further sums as may be necessary, for the purchase of land required as the site of such workhouse, or of addition to any such workhouse). Amendment proposed, page 9, line 1, after the words "Metropolitan Police district," to insert the words, "with the consent of the rate-payers in public vestry assembled." Question put, "That the proposed words be there inserted." The Committee divided—Ayes, 22, Noes, 216; Majority, 194.

Attwood, W.	Hector, C. J.	Parker, R. T.	Williams, W.
Collins, W.	Hodges, T. L.	Pechell, Capt.	TELLERS.
Dick, Q.	Holland, R.	Round, J.	Duncombe, T.
Fielden, J.	Humphrey, J.	Sibthorp, Col.	Wakley, T.
Gore, O. J. R.	Johnson, Genl.	Trotter, J.	
Grimsditch, T.	Leader, J. T.	Turner, W.	
Hawkes, T.	Moneypenny, T. G.	Walker, R.	

N.B. Among the majority, were Ashley, Lord; Baldwin, G. B.; Broadwood, H.; Brotherton, J.; Burr, H.; Copeland, Ald.; Dalrymple, Sir A.; Darby, G.; Douglas, Sir C. E.; Douro, Marquis of; Duncombe, Hon. W.; Egerton, Lord F.; Evans, Sir De L.; Goulburn, Right Hon. H.; Grote, G.; Halford, H.; Hodgson, F.; Hodgson, R.; Hume, J.; Inglis, Sir R. H.; Lascelles, Hon. W. S.; Lowther, J. H.; Morgan, O.; Peel, Right Hon. Sir R.; Rolleston, Col.; Somerset, Lord G.; Teignmouth, Lord; Wilbraham, Hon. B.; Wood, Col. *Absent, Sir F. Burdett.*

[From the *Times*, March 30, 1841.]  
A summary of the votes given by the members of the Provisional Committee appointed by the Society for the Extinction of the Slave-trade, and for the Civilization of Africa, in June, 1839, on the Bill for the Amendment of the Poor-Law.

The first point to be observed is, that not one of these members has ever given a vote against the Bill, or any clause of it. The second is, that the continued absence of some members during the whole of the discussions, is *prima facie* evidence that they are favourable rather than hostile to the Bill, otherwise they would have attended to vote against it. And the third is, that in the subjoined table, the word "for" means that the parties voted in favour of the ministerial proposition, and "abs." means absent.

	Division 8th Feb. on second reading.	Division 19th March for going into Committee.	Division on 1st clause.	First division on the 22nd March.	Second Division on the 22nd March.	Division on the 4th clause on the 26th March.
Rt. Hon. S. Lushington, and Sir R. H. Inglis, Deputy-Chairman	For	For	For	For	For	For
Earl of Euston	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.
Lord C. Fitzroy	For	For	Abs.	For	For	Abs.
Lord Sandon	For	For	For	Abs.	Abs.	For
Lord Ashley	Abs.	For	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.
Lord Eliot	Abs.	Abs.	For	For	For	For
Lord Worsley	For	For	Abs.	For	For	For
Lord Teignmouth	For	For	Abs.	For	For	For
Hon. C. P. Villiers	For	For	Abs.	For	For	For
Right Hon. T. B. Macaulay	For	For	For	Abs.	Abs.	For
Sir T. Acland	For	For	For	For	For	For
T. D. Acland	Abs.	For	For	For	Abs.	For
E. Baines	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	For
John I. Briscoe	For	For	Abs.	For	Abs.	For
W. Ewart	For	Abs.	For	For	For	For
W. Evans	Abs.	For	For	For	For	For
B. Hawes	For	For	For	For	For	For
John Irving	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.
Charles Lushington	For	For	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	For
B. Smith	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	For	Abs.	Abs.

## NEW POOR-LAW STATISTICS, RETURNS, ETC.

"Mr. Grimsditch would just allude to the situation of the Union of Lancaster. This Union had been in operation nearly two years, and he held in his hand copies of some of the quarterly accounts, showing the number of persons who had been relieved and the amount expended; but so great was the number of paupers, that he thought it impossible to manage this Union according to the new workhouse system. The Guardians had purchased a quantity of land for the purpose of building a new workhouse, but this they afterwards abandoned. The Union consisted of 41 townships, extending over 60,500 acres, and with a population of 150,000. For the quarter ending 25th March, 1837, he found, exclusive of those to whom relief was afforded by the workhouse, 3,040 had received out-door relief; for the quarter ending 24th June, the number was 4,447; and for the quarter ending 29th September, 4,587. He would put it to the good sense and feeling of the House whether Government ought not to take these circumstances into consideration; and he would ask, whether it was possible that any Union could accommodate such a mass of people. He felt assured it was impossible, and he was anxious that the Poor-Law Commissioners should take it into consideration as the first point of their inquiry. He was certain that hon. members would be convinced, by the returns he moved for, that it was impossible to apply this system universally."—*House of Commons*, Dec. 12, 1837.

"But it is said, Sir, that ignorance prevails in the manufacturing districts of the excellent working of the New Poor-Law. The answer that he (Mr. Fielden) would give to this charge would be found in the petitions presented to this House last Session. Sir, for repeal there were 164 petitions, signed by 201,967 persons. For amendment 152 petitions, signed by 63,796. For exemption from the act 17 petitions, signed by 2,269, and in support of the act only 35 petitions, signed by 952 persons. So much for ignorance, Sir; if it be such, it overspreads the land. Sir, there was no necessity for this law in the manufacturing districts. Lord Althorp, when the Bill was passing through the House, stated his doubts strongly of in-

roducing its operation there. What would he have now said, when it is being introduced with bullets and bayonets? Sir, the noble lord, the Secretary for the Home Department, had better retrace his steps; he is treading on dangerous ground, and he will effect no good, but otherwise, by carrying the law into the North, even if he can succeed. From return in a third report of the Commissioners the expenditure is given per head, according to the population of 1831, for 1834 and 1837 for all the counties in England and Wales. This return shows—that in 1834, in Sussex, the expenditure was highest, being 18s. 1d. per head; that in the West Riding of York, in which Bradford is situate, the expenditure is only 5s. 2d. per head at the same period, being the lowest expenditure of any of the counties, except Cumberland and Lancaster; and that in 1837 Essex was the highest, being 9s. 4d. per head, and the West-Riding of Yorkshire was the lowest expenditure of all the counties except Lancaster, the West-Riding being 3s. 6d. per head, and Lancaster 2s. 9d. per head. Now, Sir, these facts speak volumes against the unjustifiable proceedings at Bradford."—*Mr. Fielden, House of Commons*, Dec. 11, 1837.

"**POOR-LAW UNIONS.**—Returns have been received from 501 English Unions, showing the size in square miles, the population, and the number of elected and *ex-officio* Guardians in each. These Unions comprise a total area of 39,205 square miles, and comprise a population of 8,668,270. The average population of each Union is consequently 17,302, and the average area is 78 square miles. One of the Northumberland Unions contains 331 square miles, but the population which it comprises is under 7,000. The town Unions, on the other hand, are the smallest in size, and the largest in respect of population. There are not a dozen Unions which have a population exceeding 50,000; but this is exclusive of the metropolitan Unions, which, however, are exceeded in population by several Unions in the country. The Bradford Union contains the largest population of any three Unions, being 94,621, according to the



census of 1831, and allowing only for a moderate rate of increase, it may now be set down at 100,000. There are two Unions which have a population under 2,700. The number of elected and *ex-officio* Guardians in three Unions is above 100. In several Unions the *ex-officio* Guardians are equal in number to those elected by the rate-payers. The following abstract from the returns will be interesting to our local readers:—

	Sq. miles.	Guardians. El. Ex-off.	
YORKSHIRE.			
Howden .....	102	35	2
Pocklington.....	158	49	6
Bradford .....	61	29	5
Doncaster .....	168	58	15
Ecclesall Bierlow .....	37	12	3
Goole .....	55	20	2
Halifax .....	81	31	8
Rotherham .....	79	20	8
Sheffield .....	17	13	1
Settle .....	233	33	4
Skipton .....	197	47	6
Thorne.....	111	19	3

DERBY.			
Belper .....	79	53	13
Chapel-en-le-Firth .....	106	22	1
Chesterfield .....	141	39	7
Derby .....	4	27	3
Glossop .....	33	16	0
Hayfield .....	24	17	3
Shardlow .....	136	57	10

—*Northern Star*, April 21, 1838.

“REPORT OF THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS.—The Fifth Annual Report of the Poor-Law Commissioners has just made its appearance, being somewhat earlier than its predecessors in former years. The Report is less lengthy than those of former years, and is confined, as regards England and Wales, to a brief account of the proceedings of the Commissioners during the last winter, and to a few observations on the peculiar circumstances which distinguished that period with reference to the administration of relief to the poor. It also gives a detailed account of the measures which have been adopted for introducing into Ireland the provisions of the Act (1 and 2 Vic., c. 56) of last Session for the more effectual relief of the destitute poor in Ireland.—From the tabular statements in the appendix we find, that the number of Unions declared in England and Wales, to the 1st of May, 1839, is 587; the number of parishes united, 13,641, of which the population is 11,751,345, and the average amount of rates for the year, £5,530,002. The task of forming Unions in England and Wales is therefore nearly complete, the whole number of parishes being

14,490, and the number united 13,641, leaving only 849. The report contains nothing more of general interest with regard to England and Wales, except the second report of Dr. Kay on training children according to the system introduced by him into Dr. Auben's Establishment at Norwood. In Ireland the Commissioners seem to have met with no opposition, and they have accordingly formed nearly the whole kingdom into Unions.”

“POOR-LAW UNIONS.—From a Parliamentary return it appears, that the Poor-Law Unions in England and Wales include a population of 8,668,270, averaging 17,302 in each Union, measuring on an average seventy-eight square miles, and having on the average thirty-five Guardians.”

“During the month ending the 24th inst., the number of poor persons applying for a night's lodging in the Kensington workhouse have been no less than 1,099; and, in consequence of their nightly increase, the Board of Guardians have applied to the Commissioners of Police for the daily attendance of a policeman at the workhouse, between the hours of seven p. m. and two a. m., for the purpose of searching the unfortunate creatures, to see if they are in reality without the means of procuring food and shelter, which application has been complied with.”—*Times*, April 30, 1841.

“It appears from a return moved for by Mr. William Miles, M.P., that the total number of children in the respective workhouses in the different Unions (535 in all) in England and Wales, at the end of the Michaelmas quarter in 1840, amounted to 49,756, of whom 12,861 were illegitimate, and 36,895 were legitimate, and the total number of able-bodied women was 19,167, of whom 5,156 were mothers of illegitimate children. The total population of the above 535 Unions in England and Wales amounted, in 1831, to 10,709,155 persons.”

“WEALTH AND POVERTY.—M. Caspar, of Berlin, has published the following table, showing the influence of wealth and poverty respectively upon the duration of human life. He takes from the register of death in the *Almanack of Gotha*, a thousand names belonging to the families of princes and Dukes, and from the official returns of the population of Berlin a thousand names of persons who had lived upon charity, and whose deaths had been carefully registered. Of a thou-

sand rich and poor, there were existing, says M. Caspar,

At the age of	Rich.	Poor.
5 years .....	943	655
10 .....	938	598
15 .....	911	584
20 .....	886	566
25 .....	852	553
30 .....	796	527
35 .....	753	486
40 .....	693	446
45 .....	624	396
50 .....	557	338
55 .....	464	283
60 .....	398	226
65 .....	318	172
70 .....	235	17
75 .....	139	65
80 .....	57	4
85 .....	29	9
90 .....	25	4
95 .....	1	2
100 .....	0	0

—December, 1839.

"In Liverpool there are 39,300 persons living in cellars, the greater proportion of which are dark, damp, confined, ill-ventilated, and dirty."

"In Manchester and Salford, there are 18,295 persons living in cellars, and out of 37,000 dwellings, 18,000 are ill-furnished, and of these, 10,400 are described as uncomfortable. An examination of 3,000 families at Bury, gave these results:—

"In 773 houses they slept 3 to 4 in a bed.	
In 207 .....	4 to 5 .....
In 78 .....	5 to 6 .....
Total	1,058, or one-third badly off."

"Mr. Horner states, that in the examination of children under fourteen years of age, employed in factories, of boys 46 per cent. could not read, 67 per cent. could not write their names; of girls, 57 per cent. could not read, 88 per cent. could not write their names.

"The rate of mortality is greatly increased in all manufacturing towns. In Glasgow, in 1822, the rate of mortality was 1 in 44 of the population. In 1837 it was 1 in  $24\frac{1}{2}$ ."—February, 1841.

"In 1821, the population of England and Wales was 11,978,075, and the sum expended for the relief of the poor, £6,958,445. In 1831, the population was 13,897,187, and the amount expended for the poor, £6,798,889. Thus, while the population increased  $15\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. the poor-rate was materially reduced; and as the price of wheat was nearly 4s. per quarter higher in the parochial year 1831 than in 1821, the decrease in individual contribution to the poor amounted, in the course of these ten years, to more than 21 per

cent. if measured by the price of wheat, while the money contribution was reduced from 11s.  $7\frac{1}{4}$ d. per head to 9s.  $9\frac{1}{4}$ d. Thus, the sum levied for the relief of the poor, so far from being in a state of progressive advance, WAS IN A STATE OF RAPID REDUCTION until the agitation consequent on a great political measure disturbed the peaceful pursuits of the people."—*Mr. Bowen's Petition*, March, 1841.

"THE NUMBER OF POOR IN ENGLAND." — England contains above 3,900,000 poor, being one-sixth of the whole population, which is taken at 23,400,000. The agricultural and the manufacturing population are in the ratio of 2 to 3. In London there are about 105,000 poor out of 1,350,000 inhabitants. In Liverpool, 27,000, out of 80,000. In Cork, 26,000 out of 60,000. In Sunderland, 14,000 out of 17,000."—"*Christian Political Economy*," by M. De Villeneuve Bargemont, 1835.

"In England, where the German system is now acted upon, there occurred, in the 24 years from 1810 to 1834, no more than 339 cases of infanticide, or rather more than fourteen annually; and as the average population of England and Wales, according to the census of 1810, 1820, 1830, may be estimated during that period at 12,012,275, the proportion of infanticide to the population was therefore as one to 856,581."—*Eclectic Review*, April, 1841.

"Was it to be expected, that the increase of population was to take place among the rich only? Was all increase of the poor-rate to be grudged by a House of Commons which lavished hundreds of thousands on a Court and £300,000 on a single lady? (Hear, hear.) But while such sums were wasted in this way they were called on to declare that the paupers of this country were a restless and ungovernable people. Restless and ungovernable! Could it be said that, under existing circumstances, they had shown all that discontent and restlessness which had been attributed to them? He thought not; but, passing this, he would come to another point. He wished to show what was the state of things under the Poor-Law with reference to financial matters for 20 years previous to the year 1835, and he thought this must be considered as a new view of the subject, particularly if taken together with the fact of the increase of population during the same period. He took the years as ending



with the 25th of March in each year, and he found, that for the five years ending with the 25th of March, between 1814 and 1819, the expenditure of the poor-rates annually was £6,288,000. Between 1819 and 1824 it was £6,431,000; between 1824 and 1829 it was £6,157,000; between 1829 and 1834 it was £6,754,000 annually. Now, take the average of the first year of the last ten, and they had the annual average expenditure at that date, £6,360,000; take that of the last year of the ten, and they had for the annual average expenditure £6,455,000; showing in the ten years immediately before the New Poor-Law came into operation an increase of £95,000 a-year. He begged the attention of hon. members to this. Here was an increase of poor-rate expenditure, at the rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in the 10 years immediately preceding the introduction of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. In what ratio had the population increased during that time? At the ratio of 16 per cent. (Hear, hear.) Now look at the increase of wealth in the country, or of its income, as shown by the returns of legacy duty. For the 10 years ending with 1825 the amount was £319,363,000. In the period from 1825 to 1835 it was £382,577,000; giving £63,214,000 for the increase in the 10 years; or, at the rate of £6,000,000 a-year."—*Mr. Wakley, House of Commons*, Feb. 8, 1841.

"PARISH VESTRIES.—A return moved for by Viscount Sandon, M.P., of all parishes in England and Wales, with a population above 10,000 persons, which, previous to the passing of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, were governed by a vestry chosen under the provisions of the Act 59 George III., c. 12, s. 1, states the number of the said parishes to have been as follows, viz., in Carlisle 2, in Durham county 4, in Essex 1, in Gloucester 2, in Lancaster 12, in Leicester 1, in Middlesex 2, in Norfolk 1, in Northumberland 2, in Somerset 1, in Stafford 3, in Surrey 2, in York (West Riding) 3, in Glamorgan, Wales, 1.—Altogether 37."

"It was utterly impossible for the workhouse test to be applied to large and populous districts. He took, for instance, the Preston Union. In 1837 the Union was formed, and there were 34 elected Guardians, including ten *ex-officio*. The number of townships was 28, the average was about 53,000 acres; the radius  $6\frac{3}{4}$  miles. The population of the Union was, in 1831, 58, 838; it was now said to be 93,732. Preston population was,

in 1831, 33,112; it was now 63,633. The greatest number of paupers in the whole of the 28 townships before they were united, he had been informed, amounted to 657 in-door paupers, and 1,919 out-door; total, 2,576. In the December quarter, 1839, there were relieved, in-doors, 716; out of doors, 5,257; total, 5,973. In the corresponding quarter of 1840 there were relieved, in-doors, 1,170, and out of doors, 6,461; total, 7,631, showing an increase of 1,658 over the number of the preceding year, and 5,055 more than before the Union."—*Mr. T. Parker, House of Commons*, March 19, 1841.

"That our readers may form some conception of what the Union system really is in large cities and manufacturing towns, we subjoin a statement of the population of some of the largest Unions, taken from a return just laid before Parliament:—Bradford, 94,621; Halifax, 89,739; Huddersfield, 88,772; Bolton, 83,369; Kensington, 75,352; Sheffield, 74,058; Stepney, 72,446; Stockport, 70,886; Dudley, 66,009; Bath, 64,230; Whitechapel, 64,141. Thirteen others, besides these, have a population of more than 50,000; and it is worthy of remark, that these great Unions include nearly all of the places where public opinion has been most unequivocally pronounced against the law."—*Times*, March 19, 1841.

"For the continuance of this system, all who desire to retain the Commissioners on the ground that all England is not yet Unionized, must be understood to vote. But, as it would not be necessary, for this purpose, to continue their powers for so long a period as five years or upwards, those who support that proposition must be understood to go still further, and to be willing to record their confidence in the Commissioners, on the ground as well of what they have already done, as of what they have intimated with regard to their plans for the future.

"Among the reasons for such a confidence, we presume, must be reckoned their admirable discovery that paupers may be supported in a Cumberland workhouse (that of Longtown Union) for 1s. 7d. per head weekly. In that fortunate county there is another Union, which contrives to sustain the lives of its in-door pensioners upon 1s. 10d. each per week; and the average weekly cost of a pauper throughout all the workhouses of the nine Unions in the county is just 2s.  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per

head. Happy rate-payers of Cumberland, and happy poor!"—*Ibid.*

"HOW RUINOUSLY THE OLD LAW WORKED!—From documents to the British Association it appears, that the increase of carriages from 1820 to 1833 was one-fourth; armorial bearings, one-third; and male servants, ditto."—*Annual Register*, 1837.

"Previously to the Act of Elizabeth, the number of crimes committed through the country was enormous. In the reign of Henry VIII. alone, 70,000 were executed for theft and other offences. In Somersetshire, though 40 were hanged in one year, four-fifths of the guilty escaped. In London, even, it was found necessary to empower a certain officer to seize offenders in the streets, and hang them without trial."—*Lord John Russell's Speech on the Irish Poor-Law*, Feb. 13, 1837.

"ESTABLISHMENT EXPENSES.—With regard to the expense of the system, it had been calculated, that the whole average charge for each person in the English workhouses, including lodging, fuel, clothing, and diet, was 1s. 6d. per head per week. If, therefore, we take a hundred Union-houses, each containing 800 inmates, and suppose them all fully occupied, the annual expense for the whole will be £312,000."—*Ibid*

"DEATHS BY STARVATION.—In the latter half-year of 1837, there were 63 cases attributed to 'starvation.' In 1838, the deaths of 167 persons,—126 males and 41 females,—were classed under the same head."—*Companion to the Almanac for 1841, and Mr. Farr's Tables*.

"DEATHS BY STARVATION AND WANT.—The mean annual Mortality out of a population of a million of both sexes:—Males, 17; Females, 5; Mean —11."—*Farr's Necrological Tables for 1838*.

"INCREASE OF POPULATION.—Whilst the increase of population in England and Wales, in 30 years, from 1801 to 1831, has been something more than 47 per cent. the actual increase in the number of inhabitants of five of our most important provincial towns has very nearly doubled that rate; being,

Manchester .....	109 per cent.
Glasgow .....	108 "
Birmingham .....	73 "
Leeds .....	99 "
Liverpool .....	100 "

—*House of Commons Report*, 1840.

"From a return lately moved for by Mr. W. Miles, M.P., we find that the

total amount of salaries and other payments received in 1840, by the Poor-Law Commissioners and Secretaries, Clerks, &c., and by all the Assistant-Commissioners for salaries, travelling expenses, and allowances for clerks, &c., in England, was £41,831, and in Ireland, £19,435, making the total expense of the Commission £61,266. The amount of printing expenses incurred in 1840 by the Poor-Law Commission was, altogether, £3,320."

"From a return recently moved for by Sir E. Knatchbull, Bart., M.P., it appears, that the number of Unions to which special and not general rules have been given by the Commissioner in 1840, is very nearly 500."

"POOR-LAW COMMISSION.—We find from a return lately moved for by Sir Edward Knatchbull, Bart., M.P., that the total sums paid for law expenses, by order of the Poor-Law Commissioners, from 1835 to 1840, inclusive, amounted to upwards of £5,000."

"POPULOUSNESS OF ENGLAND AND WALES.—The number of inhabitants to a square mile in England and Wales is at present about 265. In Westmoreland there are little more than 70; and in Lincolnshire, almost a purely agricultural county, there are about 120. Mr. Farr states, that in the East and West London Unions the number of inhabitants to a square mile is 186,046; and that the greatest density attained in the heart of English cities is 243,000 to a geographical square mile."—*Companion to the Almanac for 1840*.

"In the quarter ending Lady-day, 1840, the number of persons relieved by in-door relief was 134,000, whilst the number of those relieved by out-door relief amounted to 747,000. The number of able-bodied persons, including their families, relieved in England alone, during that quarter, was 93,134, and in England and Wales 104,356."—*Lord John Russell, House of Commons*, March 26, 1841.

"The total number of parishes in England and Wales, actually incorporated into Unions by the Poor-Law Commissioners, is 13,670; the number not subject to their control 799, of which only 288 are under Gilbert's Act, and the remainder principally under local acts."—*Times*, March 18, 1841.

#### POOR-LAW PETITIONS.

"The number of petitions presented, during the Session of 1837, was 314; of



these only 35 were in favour of the New Law, and all, with two exceptions, from Whig Boards of Guardians; 21 prayed for exemption from the law; 18 for an amendment; 44 relate to the neglectful medical treatment of the poor; and 82 from public meetings. There were 60,000 signatures to the petitions praying for an amendment; 19 petitions contained specific allegations or complaints of private treatment; and 107 prayed for a total repeal. These 107 had 201,967 signatures.

"In the Session of 1838, 367 petitions were presented; 22 of which were in favour of the New Law; seven, to which 8,760 signatures were attached, prayed for exemption from it; 51 for general amendments; 12, with 7,684 signatures, contained specific allegations against it; and 263, with 225,000 signatures, prayed for its total repeal.

"In the Session of 1839, five petitions, signed by 87 individuals, were presented in favour of the New Law; 98 for amendment and alteration, with 5,771 signatures, and 11 for total repeal, bearing 4,466 signatures.

"In the Session of 1840, 87 petitions, with 6,526 signatures, praying for repeal, or alteration, of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act; in support five, with 79 signatures. Against the Poor-Law Amendment Bill, 78 petitions, with 9,343 signatures; for the same one, with one signature. Against the Poor-Law Commission Bill, 20 petitions, with 2,485 signatures; in favour of the same, five, with 63 signatures. Against the Union Workhouse Bill, 62 petitions, with 3,253 signatures; in favour of, 24, with 533 signatures."

"It appears by the printed returns of the House of Commons, that up to the 26th of February, there had been presented 166 petitions for the repeal or alteration of the New Poor-Law, and these signed by 35,063; while, on the other hand, there had been presented in favour of this obnoxious law two petitions signed by two persons."—*Times*, March 9, 1841.

SOMERSET-HOUSE AND GILBERT UNIONS.—"The number of paupers in workhouses is about 98,000; the number of paupers receiving out-door relief is above 560,000; that is, more than five to one in favour of the Gilbert system, even according to p. 29, 'Report of the Poor-Law Commissioners on the Continuance of the Commission!' But go into details,

and take, for instance, 1st quarter, 1839, as reported in the *Yorkshire Gazette*, the York New Poor Union, where it is notorious, that Mr. Assistant-Commissioner Revans is not very scrupulous in the means he takes to get rid of a Relieving Officer if he does not like him. 'From the abstract of the Union account, it appears, that during the quarter there have been relieved the following number of paupers:—

	In-door.	Out-door.
" Adults { Males.....	25.....	356
{ Females.....	49.....	838
" Children .....	40.....	1,008

The expenditure of the Board for the quarter is:—

" In maintenance .....	£204 10 0
" Out-relief .....	£2,170 19 5½

Or, ten to one in money, twenty to one in persons, in favour of the Gilbert system."—"Gilbertise the New Poor-Law," by the Rev. E. Duncombe, of Newton Kyme, near Tadcaster, published July, 1841.

PROXY VOTING.—"By the Poor-Law Commissioners' Continuance Report, it is shown, that there are Guardians—*elected*, 16,667; *ex-officio*, 4,198; that is, one landlord and magistrate, self-created a Guardian, to four tenants-at-will, under the landlord class. Can anything be more grossly selfish in the Parliamentary class? Can anything more certainly demonstrate, that the New Poor-Law ought to be called the New Property-Law? Yes, there yet remains mixed up with *ex-officio* Guardians another poisonous ingredient. By this New Poor-Law, by your idol experiment of 1834, you have not only set up in the Board-room, the taxation-room, where the common rights and interests of the rate-payers ought alone to be represented, 4,198 landlords and magistrates against 16,667 commonly dependent, though elected Guardians, but you have also increased the power of landlords as landlords in the election of even these, four to one. Yes, landlords, not content with sharing equally with occupiers and as occupiers, have arrogated in this New Poor-Law additional *plurality of votes for themselves*; nor is this all. It might be inconvenient to landlords to be subjected to equal laws with the rate-payers. It would curtail their hunting and shooting, their lounging and yawning—or unpleasant salutations might sometimes meet their ears if they came as Englishmen to the poll. Therefore, this scandalous landlord 'plurality of votes,' is carried out by proxy."—*Ibid*.

Returns to an Order of the House of Commons, dated 2d of February, 1841. (Lord Granville Somerset.) Ordered to be printed February 18, 1841.

A Return of the Number of Parishes, together with the Amount of their Aggregate Population, according to the last Census in each County in *England* and *Wales*, which were not comprised in Unions under the Provisions of the Act 4 & 5 Wm. IV., c. 76, on the 25th of March, 1838, 1839, and 1840, respectively;—also, a like Account of Parishes which were included in Unions under the Provisions of the above Act, at the same Date.

COUNTIES.	Number of Parishes Not Comprised in Unions on the 25th of March in each of the following Years.				Number of Parishes Included in Unions on the 25th of March in each of the following Years.			
	1838.		1839.		1838.		1839.	
	Number of Parishes.	Population in 1831.	Number of Parishes.	Population in 1831.	Number of Parishes.	Population in 1831.	Number of Parishes.	Population in 1831.
<b>ENGLAND :</b>								
Bedford					134	95,483	134	95,483
Berks					189	145,389	189	145,389
Buckingham					223	146,529	223	146,529
Cambridge	1	2,055	1	2,055	174	141,900	174	141,900
Chester	9	21,363	9	21,363	478	313,028	478	313,028
Cornwall					216	300,938	216	300,938
Cumberland	89	92,092			114	76,689	203	169,681
Derby	107	48,097	53	20,334	203	189,073	257	216,836
Devon	25	94,205	25	94,205	447	400,273	447	400,273
Dorset					284	159,252	284	159,252
Durham					280	253,910	280	253,910
Essex					412	317,507	412	317,507
Gloucester	20	59,074	20	59,074	362	327,945	362	327,945
Hereford					255	111,211	255	111,211
Hertford					141	143,341	141	143,341
Huntingdon					106	53,192	106	53,192
Kent	14	12,172	14	12,172	409	466,983	409	466,983
Lancaster	67	382,203	67	382,203	382	954,651	382	954,651
Leicester	7	2,594	7	2,594	301	194,409	301	194,409
Lincoln					705	317,465	705	317,465
Middlesex	14	604,162	14	604,162	196	754,168	196	754,168
Monmouth					145	98,130	145	98,130
Norfolk	45	61,413	45	61,413	682	328,641	682	328,641
Northampton					334	179,336	334	179,336
Northumberland					492	222,912	492	222,912
Nottingham					263	225,327	263	225,327
Oxford	13	18,615	13	18,615	273	133,541	273	133,541
Rutland					53	19,385	53	19,385
Salop	22	48,039	22	48,039	236	174,899	236	174,899
Somerset					488	404,200	488	404,200
Southampton	48	73,639	48	73,639	286	240,641	286	240,641
Stafford	33	46,414	22	6,371	206	364,098	217	404,141
Suffolk	2	11,436	2	11,436	507	284,881	507	284,881
Surrey	7	54,342	7	54,342	143	431,992	143	431,992
Sussex	52	70,796	52	70,796	263	201,544	263	201,544
Warwick	9	145,542	9	145,542	237	191,068	237	191,068
Westmoreland					108	55,041	108	55,041
Wilt	5	10,329	5	10,329	329	229,827	329	229,827
Worcester					218	211,365	218	211,365
York, East Riding	32	41,189	32	41,189	386	163,064	386	163,064
York, North Riding	52	18,903	41	14,579	467	171,853	478	176,177
York, West Riding	299	323,337	287	307,335	342	653,013	354	669,015
<b>TOTALS OF ENGLAND</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>2,242,011</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>2,061,787</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>2,034,844</b>	<b>12,469</b>	<b>10,848,994</b>
<b>WALES :</b>								
Anglesey					72	48,325	72	48,325
Brecon					103	47,763	103	47,763
Cardigan					96	64,780	96	64,780
Carmarthen					102	100,740	102	100,740
Carnarvon					73	66,448	73	66,448
Denbigh	2	3,302	2	3,302	83	80,327	83	80,327
Flint					40	60,012	40	60,012
Glamorgan					165	126,612	165	126,612
Merioneth					34	35,315	34	35,315
Montgomery	22	17,066	22	17,066	47	49,416	47	49,416
Pembroke					148	81,425	148	81,425
Radnor					62	24,651	62	24,651
<b>TOTALS OF WALES</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20,368</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20,368</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20,368</b>	<b>1,025</b>	<b>785,814</b>
<b>TOTALS OF ENGLAND &amp; WALES.</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>2,262,379</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>2,082,155</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>2,055,212</b>	<b>13,494</b>	<b>11,634,808</b>
							<b>13,671</b>	<b>11,815,032</b>
							<b>13,695</b>	<b>11,841,975</b>



## No. 2.

A Return of the Total Sum levied for the Relief of the Poor in all the Parishes comprised in Unions under the authority of Act, 4 & 5 Wm. IV., c. 76, in each of the Three Years, ending Lady-day 1838, 1839, and 1840.

Number of Parishes United, with the Amount of Money levied for the Relief of the Poor, in the Years ending Lady-day.

1838.		1839.		1840.	
Number of Parishes United.	Amount Levied.	Number of Parishes United.	Amount Levied.	Number of Parishes United.	Amount Levied.
13,494	£4,441,200	13,671	£4,865,602	13,695	£5,213,898

*Note.*—Out of the above Sums levied, are paid County Rates, Police Rates, and other Expenses.

E. CHADWICK, Secretary.

## No. 3.

A Return of Unions to which Special, and not General, Rules have been given in regard to each of the following Subjects; viz., the Diet in Workhouses; Out-door Relief in Money, Food or Clothing to able-bodied Persons, and to Widows with or without Children; the Separation in Workhouses of Man and Wife; and Out-door Medical Relief; distinguishing the Number in regard to each Object, in the Years ending the 30th of September, 1838, 1839, and 1840.

Years.	Orders relating to Diet in Workhouses.	Orders relating to Out-relief in Money, Food, or Clothing to able-bodied Persons.	Orders relating to Out-relief in Money, Food, or Clothing, to Widows with or without Children.	Orders relating to the Separation in Workhouses of Man and Wife.	Orders relating to Out-door Medical Relief.
1838	133	52	.....	94	—
1839	90	155	94	32	94
1840	50	312	312	7	312

A like Account, for the same Period, and in regard to the same Objects, of Unions to which General Rules have been given in pursuance of the same Order.

Years.	Orders relating to Diet in Workhouses.	Orders relating to Out-relief in Money, Food, or Clothing, to able-bodied Persons.	Orders relating to Out-relief in Money, Food, or Clothing, to Widows with or without Children.	Orders relating to the Separation in Workhouses of Man and Wife.	Orders relating to Out-door Medical Relief.
1838	—	—	—	—	—
1839	—	—	—	—	—
1840	.....	2	2	.....	2

*Note.*—The Provisions mentioned in the 3d, 4th, and 6th columns of the above Tables, are contained in the same Orders.

Poor-Law Commission-Office, Somerset-house,  
16th Feb., 1841.

E. CHADWICK, Secretary.

Return to an Order of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated  
2nd February, 1841.

(Lord Granville Somerset.)

A Return of the Total Sums expended in the Purchases of Land, the Erection of the Buildings, and the Fittings-up of all Workhouses for Unions, under the Authority of the Act 4 & 5 Wm. IV., c. 76, made up to Michaelmas, 1840; also, a like Return for each of the Three Years ending Lady-day, 1838, 1839, 1840, and for the Half-year ending Michaelmas, 1840.

Total Sums expended in the Purchases of Land, the Erection of the Buildings, and the Fittings-up of Workhouses, under the Act 4 & 5 Wm. IV., c. 76.

Up to Michaelmas, 1840 .....	£1,598,694
During the year ending Lady-day, 1838 .....	382,084
Ditto..... 1839 .....	410,492
Ditto..... 1840 .....	253,179
During the half-year ending Michaelmas, 1840 .....	94,235

*Note.*—The above statement only comprises 418 Unions, 140 Unions having failed to make a Return, and the Returns from 26 Unions having been found too imperfect to be used.

Of the above amount, a large portion has been paid out of the produce of the sale of parish property, and the rest has been borrowed from the Exchequer Bill Loan Commissioners, and other sources, repayable in various periods, extending from five to twenty years.

EDWIN CHADWICK, Secretary.

Return of the Total Sum paid to Officers of Unions in each of the Three Years ending Lady-day, 1838, 1839, and 1840.

Total Sums paid to Officers of 459 Unions in each of the Three Years ending Lady-day, 1838, 1839, and 1840.

Year 1838 .....	£280,490
1839 .....	318,604
1840 .....	333,651

*Note.*—One Hundred and Twenty-five Unions have not yet made Returns.

W. G. LUMLEY, Assistant-Secretary.

17th March, 1841.

A Return to an Order of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated  
February 11, 1841.

(Sir Edward Knatchbull.)

Ordered, by the House of Commons, to be printed, February 26, 1841.

For a Return of the Poor-Law Unions, distinguishing the County of each, to which an Order has been issued by the Commissioners, prohibiting Out-door Relief to able-bodied Paupers;—Also a similar Return of Unions to which no such Order has been issued.



## No. 1.

Return of the Poor-Law Unions, distinguishing the county of each, to which an Order has been issued by the Commissioners, prohibiting Out-door Relief to able-bodied Paupers;—Also, a similar Return of Unions to which no such Order has been issued.

Unions to which such an Order has been issued prohibiting Out-door Relief to able-bodied Paupers.

<b>BEDFORD :</b>	Redruth.	Teesdale.	<b>HERTS :</b>
Amphill.	<b>CUMBERLAND :</b>	Weardale.	Albans, St.*
Bedford.	Brampton.		Barnet.
Biggleswade.	<b>DERBY :</b>	<b>ESSEX.</b>	Berkhampstead.
Leighton Buzzard.	Belper.	Billericay.	Bishop Stortford.
Luton.	Chesterfield.	Braintree.	Buntingford.
Woburn.	Derby.	Chelmsford.	Hemel Hempstead.
<b>BERKS :</b>	Shardlow.	Colchester.	Hertford.
Abingdon.	<b>DEVON :</b>	Dunmow.	Hitchin.
Bradfield.	Axminster.	Epping.	Royston.
East Hampstead.	Barnstaple.	Halstead.	Ware.
Farringdon.	Bideford.	Lexden and Win-	Watford.
Hungerford.	Crediton.	stree.	Welwyn.
Newbury.	East Stonehouse.	Maldon.	<b>HUNTS :</b>
Reading.	Honiton.	Ongar.	Huntingdon.
Wantage.	Kingsbridge.	Orsett.	Ives, St.
Wokingham.	Newton Abbott.	Rochford.	Neots, St.
<b>BUCKS :</b>	Okehampton.	Romford.	
Amersham.	Plympton St. Mary.	Saffron Walden.	<b>KENT :</b>
Aylesbury.	South Molton.	Tendring.	Ashford, East.
Buckingham.	Tavistock.	West Ham.	Ashford, West.
Newport Pagnell.	Thomas, St.	Witham.	Blean.
Winslow.	Tiverton.	<b>GLOUCESTER :</b>	Bridge.
Wycombe.	Torrington.	Cheltenham.	Bromley.
<b>CAMBRIDGE :</b>	Totnes.	Chipping Sodbury.	Cranbrook.
Cambridge.	<b>DORSET :</b>	Cirencester.	Dartford.
Caxton and Arring-	Beaminster.	Clifton.	Elham.
ton.	Blandford.	Dursley.	Faversham.
Chesterton.	Bridport.	Gloucester.	Gravesend and Mil-
Ely.	Cerne.	Newent.	ten.
Linton.	Dorchester.	Northleach.	Greenwich.
Newmarket.	Poole.	Stow-on-the-Wold.	Hollingbourn.
North Witchford.	Shaftesbury.	Stroud.	Hoo.
Whittlesea.	Sherborne.	Tetbury.	Malling.
Wisbeach.	Sturminster.	Tewkesbury.	Medway.
<b>CHESTER :</b>	Wareham and Pur-	Thornbury.	Milton.
Altrincham.	beck.	Westbury-on-	North Aylesford.
Nantwich.	Weymouth.	Severn.	Romney Marsh.
Northwich.	Wimborne and	Wheatenurst.	Seven Oaks.
Worrall.	Cranborne.	Winchcombe.	Sheppey.
<b>CORNWALL :</b>	<b>DURHAM :</b>	<b>HEREFORD :</b>	Tenterden.
Austell, St.	Auckland.	Bromyard.	Tonbridge.
Bodmin.	Chester-le-Street.	Dore.	<b>LEICESTER :</b>
Columb Major, St.	Darlington.	Hereford.	Ashby-de-la-
Germans, St.	Durham.	Kington.	Zouch.
Helston.	Lanchester.	Ledbury.	Barrow-upon-Soar.
Launceston.	Sedgefield.	Leominster.	Billesden.
Liskeard.	South Shields.	Ross.	Blaby.
Penzance.	Stockton.	Weobly.	Hinckley.
			Loughborough.

\* Order rescinded in this case.

Lutterworth.  
Market Bosworth.  
Market Harboro'.  
Melton Mowbray.

## LINCOLN :

Boston.  
Bourn.  
Caistor.  
Gainsborough.  
Glanford Brigg.  
Grantham.  
Holbeach.  
Horncastle.  
Lincoln.  
Louth.  
Sleaford.  
Spalding.  
Spilsby.  
Stamford.

## MIDDLESEX :

Bethnal Green.  
Edmonton.  
George, St., in-the-East.  
Hackney.  
Hendon.  
Holborn.  
Poplar.  
Stepney.  
Strand.  
Whitechapel.

## MONMOUTH :

Abergavenny.  
Chepstow.  
Monmouth.  
Newport.  
Pontypool.

## NORFOLK :

Aylsham.  
Blofield.  
Depwade.  
Docking.  
Downham.  
Erpingham.  
Faith, St.  
Flegg, East and West.  
Forehoe.  
Freebridge Lynn.  
Guiltcross.  
Henstead.  
Loddon and Claver-  
ing.  
Mitford and Laun-  
ditch.  
Swaffham.  
Thetford.  
Tunstead and Hap-  
ping.  
Walsingham.

Wayland.  
Yarmouth, Great.

## NORTHAMPTON :

Brackley.  
Brixworth.  
Daventry.  
Hardingstone.  
Kettering.  
Northampton.  
Oundle.  
Peterborough.  
Potterspury.  
Thrapstone.  
Towcester.  
Wellingborough.

## NORTHUMBER-

## LAND :

Alnwick.  
Belford.  
Berwick-upon-  
Tweed.  
Castle Ward.  
Glendall.  
Tynemouth.

## NOTTINGHAM :

Basford.  
Bingham.  
East Retford.  
Mansfield.  
Newark.  
Nottingham.  
Radford.  
Southwell.  
Worksop.

## OXFORD :

Banbury.  
Bicester.  
Chipping Norton.  
Headington.  
Henley.  
Thame.  
Witney.  
Woodstock.

## RUTLAND :

Oakham.  
Uppingham.

## SALOP :

Atcham.  
Bridgnorth.  
Church Stretton.  
Clebury Mortimer.  
Clun.  
Drayton.  
Ellesmere.  
Ludlow.  
Madeley.  
Newport.  
Shifnall.

Wellington.  
Wem.

## SOMERSET :

Axbridge.  
Bath.  
Bedminster.  
Bridgewater.  
Chard.  
Clutton.  
Frome.  
Keynsham.  
Langport.  
Shepton Mallet.  
Taunton.  
Wellington.  
Wells.  
Williton.  
Wincanton.  
Yeovil.

## SOUTHAMPTON :

Alresford.  
Alton.  
Andover.  
Basingstoke.  
Catherington.  
Christchurch.  
Droxford.  
Fareham.  
Fordingbridge.  
Hartley Wintney.  
Havant.  
Hursley.  
Kingsclere.  
Lymington.  
New Forest.  
Petersfield.  
Portsea Island.  
Ringwood.  
Romsey.  
South Stoneham.  
Stockbridge.  
Whitchurch.  
Winchester.

## STAFFORD :

Burton-upon-  
Trent.  
Cheadle.  
Leek.  
Lichfield.  
Newcastle-under-  
Lyme.  
Penkridge.  
Seisdon.  
Stafford.  
Stoke-upon-Trent.  
Stone.  
Tamworth.  
Uttoxeter.  
Walsall.  
West Bromwich.

Wolstanton and  
Burslem.  
Wolverhampton.

## SUFFOLK :

Blything.  
Bosmere and Clay-  
don.  
Cosford.  
Hartismere.  
Hoxne.  
Ipswich.  
Mildenhall.  
Plomesgate.  
Risbridge.  
Samford.  
Stow.  
Thingoe.  
Wangford.  
Woodbridge.

## SURREY :

Bermondsey.  
Camberwell, St.  
Giles.  
Croydon.  
Dorking.  
Epsom.  
George, St., the  
Martyr.  
Godstone.  
Guildford.  
Hambledon.  
Lambeth.  
Olave's, St.  
Reigate.  
Rotherhithe.  
Saviour's, St.  
Wandsworth and  
Clapham.

## SUSSEX :

Battle.  
Chailey.  
Cuckfield.  
East Bourne.  
East Grinstead.  
Hailsham.  
Hastings.  
Horsham.  
Lewes.  
Midhurst.  
Newhaven.  
Petworth.  
Rye.  
Steyning.  
Thakeham.  
Ticehurst.  
Uckfield.  
West Bourne.  
West Firle.  
West Hampnett.



<b>WARWICK :</b>	Calne.	Droitwich.	<b>CARMARTHEN :</b>
Alcester.	Chippenham.	Dudley.	Carmarthen.
Aston.	Cricklade and Wot-	Evesham.	Llanelly.
Atherstone.	ton Bassett.	Kidderminster.	Llandilofawr.
Foleshill.	Devizes.	King's Norton.	Llandovery.
Meriden.	Highworth and	Martley.	Newcastle-in-
Nuneaton.	Swindon.	Pershore.	Emlyn.
Rugby.	Malmesbury.	Shipston-on-Stour.	
Solihull.	Marlborough.	Stourbridge.	<b>DENBIGH :</b>
Southam.	Melksham.	Tenbury.	Wrexham.
Stratford-on-Avon.	Mere.	Upton-upon-	
Warwick.	Pewsey.	Severn.	<b>GLAMORGAN :</b>
	Tisbury.	Worcester.	Neath.
<b>WESTMORELAND :</b>	Warminster.	<b>BRECKNOCK :</b>	Swansea.
East Ward.	Westbury and	Brecknock.	
	Whorwelsdown.	Crickhowel.	<b>PEMBROKE :</b>
<b>WILTS :</b>	Wilton.	Hay.	Haverfordwest.
Alderbury.	<b>WORCESTER :</b>	<b>CARDIGAN :</b>	
Amesbury.	Bromsgrove.	Aberaeron.	<b>RADNOR :</b>
Bradford.			Knighton.

Unions to which no Order has been issued prohibiting Out-door Relief to able-bodied Paupers.

<b>BERKS :</b>	<b>DEVON :</b>	Prescot.	<b>SOMERSET :</b>
Cookham.	Holsworthy.	Preston.	Dulverton.
Wallingford.	<b>DURHAM :</b>	Rochdale.	
Windsor.	Easington.	Salford.	<b>STAFFORD :</b>
	Gateshead.	Todmorden.	Eccleshall.
<b>BUCKS :</b>	Houghton-le-	Ulverstone.	<b>SUFFOLK :</b>
Eton.	Spring.	Warrington.	Mutford and Lo-
	Sunderland.	West Derby.	thingland.
<b>CHESTER :</b>		Wigan.	Sudbury.
Boughton, Great.	<b>HERTS :</b>	<b>LEICESTER :</b>	<b>SURREY :</b>
Congleton.	Hatfield.	Leicester.	Chertsey.
Macclesfield.	<b>KENT :</b>		Kingston.
Runcorn.	Dover.	<b>MIDDLESEX :</b>	Richmond.
Stockport.	Eastry.	Brentford.	<b>WESTMORELAND :</b>
	Lewisham.	Kensington.	Kendal.
<b>CORNWALL :</b>	Maidstone.	London, City.	West Ward.
Camelford.	Thanet.	London, East.	
Falmouth.	<b>LANCASTER :</b>	London, West	<b>YORK, EAST</b>
Stratton.	Ashton-under-	Martin's, St., in-	<b>RIDING :</b>
Truro.	Lyne.	the-Fields.	Beverley.
<b>CUMBERLAND :</b>	Blackburn.	Shoreditch.	Bridlington.
Alston-with-Garri-	Bolton.	Staines.	Driffield.
gill.	Burnley.	Uxbridge.	Howden.
Bootle.	Bury.	<b>NORFOLK :</b>	Patrington.
Carlisle.	Chorley.	King's Lynn.	Pocklington.
Cockermouth.	Chorlton.		Sculcoates.
Longtown.	Clitheroe.	<b>NORTHUMBER-</b>	Skirlaugh.
Penrith.	Fylde, The.	<b>LAND :</b>	York.
Whitehaven.	Garstang.	Bellingham.	<b>YORK, NORTH</b>
Wigton.	Haslingden.	Haltwhistle.	<b>RIDING :</b>
	Lancaster.	Hexham.	Easingwold.
<b>DERBY :</b>	Leigh.	Morpeth.	Guisborough.
Bakewell.	Manchester.	Newcastle-upon-	Helmsley.
Chapel-en-le-Frith.	Oldham.	Tyne.	Leyburn.
Glossop.	Ormskirck.	Rothbury.	Malton.
Hayfield.			

Northallerton.	Pateley Bridge.	Lampeter.	MERIONETH :
Pickering.	Pontefract.	Tregaron.	Bala.
Reeth.	Ripley.		Corwen.
Richmond.	Ripon.	CARNARVON :	Festiniog.
Scarborough.	Rotherham.	Bangor and Beau-	
Stokesley.	Sedbergh.	maris.	MONTGOMERY :
Thirsk.	Selby.	Carnarvon.	Llanfyllin.
Whitby.	Settle.	Pwllheli.	Montgomery.
	Sheffield.		Newton and Llan-
YORK, WEST	Skipton.	DENBIGH :	diloes.
RIDING :	Tadcaster.	Llanwrst.	Welchpool.
Barnsley.	Thorne.	Ruthin.	
Boroughbridge.	Wakefield.		PEMBROKE :
Bradford.		FLINT :	Narberth.
Dewsbury.		Asaph, St.	Pembroke.
Doncaster.	BRECKNOCK :	Holywell.	
Ecclesall Bierlow.	Buith.		RADNOR :
Goole.		GLAMORGAN :	Presteigne.
Halifax.	CARDIGAN :	Bridgend and Cow-	Rhayader.
Huddersfield.	Aberystwith.	bridge.	
Keighley.	Cardigan.	Cardiff.	
		Merthyr Tydvil.	

An Order was issued to each of the four undermentioned Unions, prohibiting relief being given to any able-bodied male person so long as he should be in employment, who should not have been in the receipt of relief at some time since the 25th of March, 1837; also, to the wife of such person resident with him, and any of the family so resident whom he should be so liable to maintain, except only in case of urgent necessity, or in cases of accident, sickness, or infirmity.

The Order also provided, that no relief should be afforded (except in the above cases), from the poor-rates of any parish or place in the Union to any pauper between the ages of 16 and 60, belonging to any such parish or place, who should not be resident in the said Union; this regulation, however, not to extend to any person who, at any time since the said 25th of March, 1837, should have been in receipt of relief, not being resident in the said Union, nor to any widow during the first three months of her widowhood.

ANGLESEY :	CARNARVON :	MERIONETH :	MONTGOMERY :
Anglesey.	Conway.	Dolgelly.	Machynlleth.

E. CHADWICK, Secretary.

[From the Rev. E. Duncombe's "Gilbertize the New Poor-Law."]

AN ACCOUNT OF THE GREAT OUSEBURN GILBERT UNION.

No. of Townships.	Acres.	Pop. 1831.	Average In-door.	Average Out-door.	Total.	Since 1828 reduction on the whole Union.	Some Townships.
42	50,000	13,000	44 $\frac{1}{3}$	200	245	35 per cent.	50 to 70 per cent.

Mr. Duncombe, in his clever work, contrasts the difference between this Gilbert Union, and the Somerset-house Union of Wandsworth and Clapham—the latter, as he says, “with fourteen *ex-officios*, exhibits, in expenditure, nearly 12 per cent. increase in the fourth year after formation.



Return to an Order of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated March 8, 1841. (Mr. Fox Maule.) Ordered, by the House of Commons, to be printed, March 10, 1841.

For a Return, showing the Number of In-door and Out-door Paupers receiving Relief in the Unions formed (under the Poor-Law Amendment-Act) in each County in England and Wales, during the Quarters ended 1839 and 1840 respectively; together with the Population of such Unions in 1831, specifying the Proportion per cent. which the Number of In-door and Out-door Paupers bear to the Population: Also, the estimated Number of Paupers relieved during the Quarter ending Lady-day, 1840, in the Twenty Unions not included in the above Return, and in the places not yet brought under the Provisions of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, assuming the same Ratio of Paupers relieved to the Population, thereby showing the estimated Total Number of Paupers relieved, in the whole of England and Wales, during the Quarter ending Lady-day, 1840, with a List of the Counties, arranged according to the highest Rate per Cent of Paupers relieved to the Population.

COUNTIES.	Number of Unions.	Population in 1831.	NUMBER OF PAUPERS RELIEVED.						Proportion per Cent. of Total Number of Paupers to Population, Lady-day, 1840.
			Lady-day, 1839.			Lady-day, 1840.			
			In-door.	Out-door.	Total.	In-door.	Out-door.	Total.	
ENGLAND :									
Bedford .....	6	98,626	1,305	8,483	9,788	1,609	8,789	10,398	11
Berks .....	12	174,578	3,051	12,105	15,156	3,368	13,042	16,410	9
Buckingham.....	7	133,578	1,864	14,121	15,985	1,797	14,087	15,884	12
Cambridge .....	9	149,023	2,938	12,455	15,393	2,374	12,923	15,297	10
Chester .....	9	297,769	1,216	18,175	19,391	1,919	20,918	22,837	7
Cornwall .....	13	301,130	1,943	17,649	19,592	2,368	19,931	22,299	7
Cumberland .....	8	161,558	1,377	8,916	10,293	1,717	9,939	11,656	7
Derby .....	7	168,438	1,436	5,921	7,357	1,958	6,908	8,866	5
Devon .....	17	398,754	3,137	34,855	37,992	4,011	37,569	41,580	10
Dorset .....	12	152,655	1,829	17,617	19,446	1,867	17,549	19,416	13
Durham .....	14	261,250	1,176	17,497	18,673	1,188	17,332	18,520	7
Essex .....	17	293,279	5,795	30,614	36,409	6,082	29,624	35,706	12
Gloucester.....	15	274,900	3,024	17,978	21,002	3,252	19,454	22,706	8
Hereford .....	8	105,875	1,175	7,689	8,864	1,314	8,182	9,496	9
Hertford .....	13	158,090	2,599	10,657	13,256	3,207	10,715	13,922	9
Huntingdon .....	3	50,500	643	5,151	5,794	554	4,638	5,192	10
Kent .....	27	464,036	9,915	31,813	41,728	10,189	30,417	40,606	9
Lancaster .....	14	523,973	2,964	29,458	32,422	4,147	35,227	39,374	8
Leicester .....	11	197,118	1,454	13,769	15,223	2,865	16,843	19,708	10
Lincoln .....	14	310,535	2,858	15,679	18,537	3,026	15,419	18,445	6
Middlesex.....	17	696,933	15,042	33,509	48,551	15,549	34,265	49,814	7
Monmouth .....	5	104,279	496	4,722	5,218	714	5,379	6,093	6
Norfolk .....	21	324,104	5,956	29,101	35,057	4,859	26,217	31,076	10
Northampton .....	12	175,921	1,707	14,167	15,874	1,703	14,028	15,731	9
Northumberland ..	12	246,058	1,114	16,394	17,508	1,232	16,468	17,700	7
Nottingham .....	9	250,496	2,185	10,920	13,105	2,585	15,583	18,168	7
Oxford .....	8	133,501	1,983	12,279	14,262	1,901	12,979	14,880	11
Rutland .....	2	21,363	220	1,315	1,535	268	1,186	1,454	7
Salop .....	13	181,048	1,551	8,865	10,416	1,924	8,472	10,396	6
Somerset .....	17	418,910	4,162	38,452	42,614	4,001	39,461	43,462	10
Southampton .....	23	244,324	4,352	22,582	26,934	4,554	23,472	28,026	11
Stafford .....	16	352,381	3,099	14,534	17,633	3,777	15,270	19,047	5
Suffolk .....	16	281,320	5,007	29,050	34,057	4,306	27,874	32,180	11
Surrey .....	18	427,829	7,892	23,197	31,089	9,705	23,241	32,946	8
Sussex .....	20	205,153	5,681	21,259	26,940	5,319	20,830	26,149	13
Warwick .....	11	181,720	1,300	10,818	12,118	1,728	11,503	13,231	8
Westmoreland.....	3	54,994	635	3,296	3,931	771	3,974	4,745	9
Wilts .....	17	214,850	3,668	24,528	28,196	4,064	25,945	30,009	14
Worcester .....	13	288,459	1,773	16,638	18,411	2,273	16,088	18,461	6
York, East Riding	9	154,824	875	11,451	12,326	966	11,192	12,158	8
York, North Riding	12	165,601	856	11,563	12,419	901	10,726	11,627	7
York, West Riding	14	472,251	2,173	23,576	25,749	2,571	33,728	36,299	8
Totals of England.	524	10,271,984	123,426	712,818	836,344	134,583	747,387	881,970	8½

COUNTIES.	Number of Unions.	Population in 1831.	NUMBER OF PAUPERS RELIEVED.						Proportion per. Cent. of Total Number of Paupers to Population, Lady-day, 1840.
			Lady-day, 1839.			Lady-day, 1840.			
			In-door.	Our-door	Total.	In-door.	Out-door	Total.	
WALES:									
Anglesey .....	1	37,231	-	4,294	4,294	-	4,585	4,585	12
Brecknock .....	4	48,620	250	3,149	3,399	234	3,522	3,756	8
Cardigan .....	5	70,319	-	5,758	5,758	52	6,417	6,469	9
Carmarthen .....	5	104,856	208	8,377	8,585	510	8,410	8,920	9
Carnarvon .....	4	72,475	-	7,380	7,380	-	8,060	8,060	11
Denbigh .....	3	62,047	182	6,653	6,835	231	6,295	6,526	11
Flint .....	2	58,625	-	5,770	5,770	-	6,618	6,618	11
Glamorgan .....	5	134,705	357	6,897	7,254	472	7,275	7,747	6
Merioneth .....	4	41,034	-	5,380	5,380	-	5,518	5,518	13
Montgomery .....	3	56,925	-	6,033	6,033	-	6,681	6,681	12
Pembroke .....	3	72,626	217	5,475	5,692	413	5,641	6,054	8
Radnor .....	3	18,130	-	2,144	2,144	97	2,223	2,320	13
Totals of Wales.	42	777,593	1,214	67,310	68,524	2,009	71,245	73,254	9 <sup>4</sup> / <sub>10</sub>
Totals of England and Wales* ..	566	11,049,577	123,640	780,128	904,765	136,592	818,632	955,224	8 <sup>6</sup> / <sub>10</sub>

\* Exclusive of that portion of England and Wales not yet placed under the provisions of the New Poor-Law.

Number of In-door and Out-door Paupers relieved in 566 Unions, &c., in England and Wales, during the Quarters ending Lady-day, 1839 and 1840, respectively; with the Proportion per cent. of Paupers relieved to the Population.

566	11,049,577	NUMBER OF PAUPERS BELIEVED.						Proportion per cent. of Paupers relieved to Population.								
		Population in 1831.			Lady-day, 1839.			Lady-day, 1840.			Lady-day, 1839.			Lady-day, 1840.		
		In-door.	Out-door	Total.	In-door.	Out-door	Total.	In-door.	Out-door	Total.	In-door.	Out-door	Total.	In-door.	Out-door	Total.
		123,640	780,128	904,765	136,592	818,632	955,224	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>10</sub>	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>10</sub>	8 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>10</sub>	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>10</sub>	7 <sup>4</sup> / <sub>10</sub>	8 <sup>6</sup> / <sub>10</sub>			

Total Number of Paupers relieved in 566 Unions, during the Quarter ending Lady-day, 1840, as shown in the preceding Table .....  
 Estimated Number of Paupers relieved during the same Period in the 20 Unions not included in the preceding Table, and in the places not yet brought under the Poor-Law Amendment-Act; calculated on a Population of about 2,847,000, assuming the same ratio of Paupers relieved to the Population .....  
 Estimated Total Number of Paupers relieved in England and Wales, during Quarter ending Lady-day, 1840 .....

955,224

246,120

1,201,344



Counties arranged according to their highest Rate per cent. of Paupers Relieved to Population.

Per Cent. on Population.			Per Cent. on Population.			Per Cent. on Population.		
Wilts.....	14		Huntingdon .....	10		Brecknock.....	8	
Dorset ..	13		Leicester .....	10		Pembroke .....	8	
Sussex .....	13		Norfolk .....	10		Chester .....	7	
Merioneth .....	13		Somerset .....	10		Cornwall .....	7	
Radnor .....	13		Berks .....	9		Cumberland .....	7	
Buckingham .....	12		Hereford .....	9		Durham.....	7	
Essex .....	12		Hertford .....	9		Middlesex .....	7	
Anglesey .....	12		Kent .....	9		Northumberland .....	7	
Montgomery .....	12		Northampton.....	9		Nottingham .....	7	
Bedford.....	11		Westmoreland .....	9		Rutland.....	7	
Oxford .....	11		Cardigan .....	9		York, N. R.....	7	
Southampton.....	11		Carmarthen .....	9		Lincoln.....	6	
Suffolk .....	11		Gloucester.....	8		Monmouth.....	6	
Carnarvon .....	11		Lancaster .....	8		Salop.....	6	
Denbigh .....	11		Surrey .....	8		Worcester.....	6	
Flint .....	11		Warwick .....	8		Glamorgan .....	6	
Cambridge.....	10		York, E. R.....	8		Derby .....	5	
Devon .....	10		York, W. R.....	8		Stafford.....	5	

[From the Rev. E. Duncombe's "Gilbertize the New Poor-Law."]

EXPENSES OF GREAT PRESTON GILBERT UNION POOR-HOUSE FOR TEN YEARS.

Years.	Average Number of Poor in the House.	Average cost of provisions per head, per week.		Average cost of provisions per week for the whole house.			Annual cost of provisions.			Annual cost of the Establishment.			Total expenses of the Poor-house.		
		s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
1831	40	3	0	6	0	0	312	0	0	154	12	0	466	12	0
1832	43	3	0	6	6	0	327	12	0	159	10	0	487	2	0
1833	46	2	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	6	4	0	322	8	0	178	8	0	500	16	0
1834	37	2	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	4	19	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	258	10	9	415	15	0*	674	5	9
1835	26	2	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	3	6	1	171	16	4	198	10	0	370	6	4
1836	27	2	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	3	8	7	178	6	4	333	0	0*	511	6	4
1837	33	2	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	4	5	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	222	6	0	144	0	0	366	6	0
1838	35	2	8	4	14	2	244	16	8	169	14	0	414	10	8
1839	38	3	1	5	17	2	304	12	8	175	7	0	479	19	8
1840	37	2	7 $\frac{1}{4}$	4	16	9	251	11	0	166	1	0	417	12	0
Average of Ten Years.	36	2	10	4	3	2				209	9	0	468	16	0

\* Building repairs caused this charge.

N. B. The average inmates of the Preston Poor-house—36 in a population of 20,000. Here Mr. Duncombe draws these comparisons:—

The average expense of "establishment" upon the land is,  
In Preston Gilbert Union, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per acre. In Wandsworth New Poor-Law Union, £1 10s. per acre.

The average expense of "establishment" on the whole population is,  
In Preston Old Poor-Law Union, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per head. In Wandsworth New Poor-Law Union, 10s. per head.

GILBERT SIDE.  
The three Unions of Great Ouseburn, Preston, and Barwick.

Acres.	Pop.	In-door.
175,000	47,000	124
	or,	
Persons, 1 to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres.		
Inmate, 1 to 1400 acres.		

NEW POOR-LAW SIDE.  
Wandsworth and Clapham Union.

Acres.	Pop.	In-door.
10,600	33,000	365,
	or,	
Persons, 3 to 1 acre.		
Inmate, 1 to 28 acres.		

SERVANTS' WAGES.

Gilbert Union—Barwick, £125 per year.

One New Poor-Law Union, £2,065 per year.

## BASTARDY—ITS INCREASE, &c., UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE NEW POOR-LAW.

“————— To general filths  
Convert o’ the instant, green virginity.”—TIMON, Act 4, s. 1.

“Guilty of a several bastardy.”—JULIUS CÆSAR.

“We met a girl; her dress was loose,  
And sunken was her eye!  
Who, with the wanton’s hollow voice,  
Address’d the passers by.  
I ask’d her what there was in guilt,  
That could her heart allure  
To shame, disease, and late remorse,—  
She answered she was *poor*.”—SOUTHEY.

“Returns had been ordered of the number of children registered by the clergy as illegitimate children, during the four years previous to the passing of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, and the four years following it. What had been the result? Had it been as favourable as the friends of the law had anticipated? No. There had been, on the contrary, a *large increase* in the number of illegitimate children registered as baptized. But did their lordships think that increase really measured the increase of illegitimate children that had been born? He wished he could flatter himself, or had any reason to induce their lordships to conclude, that this was anything like a *fair criterion* by which to judge of the truth. They might be quite sure, that the number of those unhappy children born since that period, and not baptized, was *considerably greater* than the number of those returned as registered and baptized. For it should be recollected what was the state of things before the Poor-Law passed. Then, the birth of an illegitimate child was a matter of notoriety; the mother was obliged to proclaim the birth in order to get relief from the parish, and there was no motive for concealment, or for not taking the child to be baptized. Then the mother would have been ashamed to keep the child of sin, which she had brought into the world, from that blessed sacrament, which was intended at least to impart a hope of salvation hereafter. But, now, the mother was tempted to do the utmost to keep her illegitimate child from baptism, because her chief object was to avoid exposure, and to conceal the fact that she had given birth to a child. He did not speak lightly on this subject;

but he would ask, Was the increase of the number of illegitimate children, who were supposed to live, a satisfactory subject for their lordships to consider? Far from it! But what would they say, if the number of children brought into the world only to be sent out of it by the guilty hand of their mothers, could be ascertained? Let them go to Chester, and inquire there what had recently occurred at the assizes of that county, and then let them say whether infanticide had not greatly increased since the passing of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act.”—*The Bishop of Exeter, House of Lords, July 25, 1839.*

“He had so often heard that the New Poor-Law system had raised the moral character of the country, that he believed it to be true. What, then, was his astonishment to find, that the returns presented to the House of Lords the other day, showed the number of illegitimate children registered in certain counties, for the three years subsequent to the passing of the New Act, was  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. greater than in the three years preceding—8,579 before, and subsequently 9,548.”—*Mr. Hindley, House of Commons, July 15, 1839.*

“At the Quarter-sessions of the Peace, held at Knutsford last week, for the county of Chester, no less than *sixty cases* of bastardy were disposed of.”—*Dispatch, July, 1839.*

“Many (the same) girls have lain in with illegitimate children *twice* and *thrice* in the Hereford Union workhouse. Where’s the moral check? A *dozen* girls, about the same time, were, in that Union, delivered of bastards in the winter of 1839.”—*From a Correspondent, a Surgeon to the Hereford Union.*



"With regard to the Bastardy clause, it was the *greatest failure*, and in this parish (Wangford, Suffolk) has had the effect of making *almost all* the young women the mothers of children without being married."—*Correspondent to the "Champion,"* Dec. 1, 1839.

"The Guardians of the Poor in the Howden Union, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, have petitioned the House of Commons against the Bastard law, which they describe as a 'law which, instead of being a terror to evil-doers, in its present state, operates as a license to the vicious.'"—*Birmingham Advertiser*, March 26, 1840.

"On Thursday last, the Relieving Officers of *thirty-eight parishes* were questioned by the magistrates as to the working of the Bastardy clause in the places under their observation, when every one of the officers, but the Overseer of Weddiker, which contains only six houses, declared, that cases of bastardy were of *more frequent* occurrence than before the passing of the Act."—*Cumberland Pacquet*, April 8, 1837.

"The New Act has been in operation with us, as it respects the Bastardy clauses, for three years, during which period we have made satisfactory progress as it regards the question of morality. The following yearly return of the number of bastard children, born in the township of Halifax, has been copied from the Overseer's register, for the information of the Poor-Law Commissioners, to whom it cannot fail to be a *most gratifying and acceptable* document:—

" 'Number of Bastards baptized in the township—	
" 'From 25th of March, 1834, to 25th of March, 1835 .....	32
" 'From 25th of March, 1835, to 25th of March, 1836 .....	39
" 'From 25th of March, 1836, to 25th of March, 1837 .....	71
Total....	142'

We call upon every candid and honourable person to ask himself, if this be not a sufficient answer to the eternal boasting of the improvement effected in the morals of the working classes by the New Poor-Law? Can a more decisive contradiction be given to it?"—*Halifax Guardian*, April 15, 1837.

"At the last meeting of the Stamford Board of Guardians, it was stated by one of the members, that in the parish he represented at that Board, there were no

fewer than *sixteen females* who had burdened the parish with their illegitimate offspring."—*Champion*, Dec. 2, 1838.

"In Bedfordshire bastardy had increased."—*Mr. Fielden's Speech*, Feb. 20, 1838.

"During the last fortnight, no less than *thirty children* have been deserted in St. Giles's and St. Sepulchre's parishes, and are now in the workhouses!"—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal*, June 3, 1837.

"At the Carlisle assizes (the 23rd of March, 1838), Isabella Stockdale was tried before Mr. Justice Patterson, for the murder of her infant child, at Law Hesketh, on the 11th of Dec. previous. It was proved in evidence, that she had left her bed repeatedly in the night, and had at length delivered herself of a child, at 200 yards' distance from the house. The child was found in a ditch, with a mark of a blow on the head, but the child was not dead when it was discovered; it was conveyed to the house, and the mother said, that she had *rued* what she had done! The learned judge '*intimated*,' that he thought the case was too doubtful a one for a jury to convict upon! The prisoner was acquitted, and discharged, after a solemn admonition from his lordship! Now, I beg his lordship's pardon, but if I had been a juror on that trial, I would have given a very different turn to that case. There was not a soul in that court who had the slightest doubt of the guilt of the prisoner, the judge himself not excepted; and yet he, in mercy, '*intimated*' to the jury, that there was no evidence to convict; and these '*twelve jurors*' acquitted her. Is this a state of things to be desired, that a criminal should be acquitted to screen a cruel law; a law which induced her to commit the crime? I contend it was *premeditated murder*. She left her bed repeatedly to deliver herself, and to kill and to secrete the child! Is this an example to go forth to the world, that the murderer of a child is to be acquitted? I should have said, '*Guilty*,' my lord. But I am not blood-thirsty; if this woman be hanged, she will be *murdered*; and *murdered, too, by the men who passed the Bastardy clauses of the New Poor-Law*; they have already caused the murder of the child, let them save the mother. The judge must have performed his painful duty; but the executioner would not be called upon to perform his."—*The Suffolk Juror*.

"Oh! this cruel, this barbarous law! Can any one call it other than a *bounty on infanticide*? At the assizes, at Stafford, on the 15th of March, 1838, Ann Thursfield was indicted for the wilful murder of her illegitimate child by suffocating it, but Mr. Baron Gurney observed, as the evidence of the surgeon, the first witness, proved that the marks on the face *might* be caused by the child being overlaid, it was unnecessary to go further. Not guilty! *The judges shake under the law.* Will not the makers of the law have to answer at a higher tribunal?"—*Ibid.*

"I will state one fact that would seem to argue that this evil (bastardy) must be on the increase. A clerical brother informed me, that he found several unmarried parties living in his parish, in this place, in a state of concubinage, some with families, and some without; and that when he remonstrated with them, and endeavoured to prevail upon them to marry, the reply of the men had been, 'No, Sir; we are very happy together, and live constant to each other, and shall continue to do so as if we were lawfully married;' but marry we will not; because, if we were to do so, the women could not, with the children, go into the workhouse without us men, which they can now do!"—*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath) to the Author*, dated Oct. 8, 1840.

"I am quite sure you may, with perfect confidence state, that bastardy has increased, and will increase, as long as the strongest party is free to exercise all his power over the weaker, and *she* is *responsible*, and must take all the consequences. A neighbour of mine, last year, was saying, he was sorry to say he was about to lose one of his very best men,—for he had told him, that there were *three* girls in the family-way by him, and they were always teasing him, and he thought he should go away into some distant county. But I do not think he went away at all, or appeared to think or care one atom about them. And this, I believe, to be a sample of thousands; and I must leave you to draw your own conclusions as to how *many are secretly got rid of by hook and crook*; as it is quite certain the burthens on the females are greater than they can bear. I really believe this accursed law drives many young females from want into crime and infanticide at the hazard of their lives; and if I were to see any statements which might

pretend to show a decrease in instances of bastardy, I should not believe them, because I am convinced there are a *great number* that never can be brought into any account at all: in fact, common sense and common reason must expect such poor females to say to themselves—'We may as well run the hazard of our lives in concealing our shame and disgrace, as to be brought to public shame and disgrace in one of these horrible Union gaols, and there treated worse than beasts—and have our lives considered of no value—only as far as sometimes for boys, put apprentices to surgeons, to practice on.'"—*From a Southern County Correspondent*, dated Oct. 10, 1840.

"I have been trying to obtain something about bastardy here, but cannot. I have called upon Registrars, but could gain nothing satisfactory; indeed, they cannot give the required information. One told me, a day or two since, that it was impossible to judge, since he had found that *thirty or forty births*, in his district, were annually omitted to be registered."—*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath) to the Author*, dated Oct. 23, 1840.

"There is no diminution of bastards whatever. In the last quarter, at Bourn (Lincolnshire), the bill of the medical department as to midwifery, consisted entirely of *bastardy* cases."—*Extract of a Letter from a Stamford Correspondent*, dated Oct. 24, 1840.

"The Pembroke Union workhouse has been, since its reception of paupers commenced, almost entirely populated by prostitutes and females of light character, going in to be delivered of their illegitimate offspring, that it is now commonly called by the inhabitants, the 'Lying-in Hospital.'"—*Extract of a Letter from a Pembroke Correspondent*, dated October, 1840.

"Bastardy has increased *four per cent.* in the North Riding of Yorkshire."—*Companion to the Almanac*, 1838.

"I am satisfied instances of bastardy have no *way diminished*, in any places that come within my own knowledge. They may not appear so numerous before the public, but the number of girls that come home to these parts with child, I think *far greater* than it used to be; for, hereabouts, they have such a dislike to the Union-houses, that they will undergo almost any privations rather than go in; and yet the bastardy cases, even in these houses, are on the increase."—*Extract of*



*a Letter from Gen. Johnson, M. P., to the Author, dated Wytham, near Stamford, Nov. 16, 1840.*

"The cruel operation of the Bastardy clause of the New Poor-Law on numbers of *seduced and deserted females*, is dreadful. It is working death in a variety of forms, and misery beyond description. I have frequently had cases of a most painful nature before me as a magistrate. It is giving full liberty to the unprincipled and licentious."—*Rowarth's "Observations on the Administration of the Poor-Law in Nottingham,"* 1840.

"We have to state the death of an infant supposed to have been deserted by its mother. At the recent assizes for this county, one woman was indicted for the murder of her child, and another for concealing the birth of her offspring. Early on Tuesday morning, the body of a newborn female child was found at a short distance from the turnpike near the Hereford beacon, on the road between Malvern and Ledbury. On the previous night, a young woman, travelling in a carriers' waggon to this city, left the vehicle near this spot, and did not again join it until it had arrived in Ledbury, when she stated to the waggoner, as a reason for her absence, that she had felt very unwell. It is suspected that the child belonged to this woman, who, it is thought, had, during her absence from the waggon, delivered herself and then left the babe to perish. The child when found, was living, but died shortly afterwards, no doubt from its inhuman exposure. The woman has been committed to our county gaol on the charge of manslaughter."—*Hereford Journal*, April 21, 1841.

"Mr. Goode, of Christchurch stated, that a clergyman last week informed him that in one place in the country, *ten newborn babes* were taken out of a river in one week!"—*Southwark Anti-Poor-Law Meeting*, May 1, 1839.

"Thousands of undiscovered abortions and infant murders, are the consequences of this law of hell. Every one pities the victim, and strives to conceal the crime. The peasants—who are to be the sufferers—of course are often driven to be aiders and abettors. Not one in a hundred, it is probable, is ever heard of."—*Mr. Samuel Roberts's Pamphlet*, 1839.

"THE CORK UNION.—At a meeting of the Guardians, held on the 26th of January, 1841, Mr. Gould drew attention to a disgraceful and demoralizing trade carried on in that house—that of 'procuresses'

going in as paupers, and mixing with the young females, whom they endeavoured to deprave in mind, and then got them to seek their discharge to become prostitutes. The truth of Mr. G.'s statement was assented to by the other Guardians."—*Dublin Medical Press*.—[Whether this system of swelling the ranks of the daughters of infamy is acted upon in English Union houses, I cannot take upon myself to assert, though I think it very probable. One thing, however, I can assert, i. e. that since the introduction of the "boon" in my neighbourhood, the number of prostitutes—especially of a tender age (under 15 years)—has most alarmingly increased. The streets of Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster, Bromyard, and Ross, may now, thanks to local and central officials, fully compete with the highways and byways of Cyprus of old in her most palmy and lascivious days! G. R. W. B.]

"The following extract from a new work will corroborate, that the principles of the New Poor-Law are productive of crime—of *infant murder*—even when acted upon in other countries: 'I was naturally anxious to ascertain the probable cause of the great prevalence of that particular crime (*infanticide*) in a country (*Hungary*) where the extraordinary tenderness of parents for their children is everywhere manifest: and I requested one of the municipal judges, with whom I was acquainted, to explain to me his impression on the subject. By him the cause was stated to be twofold—*poverty and shame*. In the first case, no law enforcing the support of the infant by the father, and the mother being unable to maintain it, its destruction appeared to be generally rather an act of desperation than volition, and deferred for months, probably, in the hope that some accidental good fortune might enable her to provide for its necessities—a fact which bore painfully upon our New Poor-Law in England."—*Miss Pardoe's "City of the Magyar; or, Hungary in 1839 and 1840."*

"INCREASE OF PROSTITUTION.—Dr. Colquhoun, the author of the well-known work on the Police of the Metropolis, estimated the number of prostitutes in London at fifty thousand, whilst, in a *recent address* for an association for the suppression of prostitution, this enormous number was *still further increased to eighty thousand!!*"—*Companion to the Almanac*, 1840.

"Children of a sunnier star,  
Spirits from beyond the moon,  
Oh! refuse the 'boon'!"—SHELLEY.

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"When any women who have not 'loved wisely,' apply to be admitted into the Hereford Union-house, on account of their being in the family-way, before they are allowed to enter, they are first, one at a time, forced to appear before the Board of Guardians (Oh! if my readers could but see what beauties the *city of the snobs'* Guardians are, they would burst with laughter), and there satisfy the gentlemen (?) that they are not telling untruths concerning themselves *by turning round nine times* (a fact!!), *and finally touching their great toe without bending their knees*. After this delicate investigation has been concluded, 'some,' to use the words of my informant, a girl, who had been so 'tested,' 'come out crying,' and some laughing and not caring about it.' What say the Guardians' wives to their spouses' intense investigation of 'lovely woman when she stoops to folly.'"—*G. R. Wythen Baxter*, January, 1841.

"One of the results of the Poor-Law is that which was so strongly predicted by the Bishop of Exeter, the abandonment and exposure of infants."—*Blackwood's Magazine*, March, 1837.

"On Tuesday, a young woman, named *Eliza Chandler*, was brought before the Lord Mayor, under the following circumstances:—Mr. Cloake, of No. 3, Liverpool-street, stated, that the prisoner had been servant in his family about eight or ten days before the 30th of July, when it was found that she had delivered herself of a child, and thrown it into the water-closet. She did not look at all like a person in the family-way before the discovery was made, and had an excellent character. Upon being spoken to by her mistress, she admitted that the child had been born on the Saturday, the 27th of July. The porter found the child dead. Witness did not appear to charge her with having committed any offence. The beadle of the ward stated, that the infant appeared to be a full-grown child. He attended the inquest, which was to the effect that 'the child was found dead in the privy, but there was not sufficient evidence to determine whether it was born dead or alive.' One of the inspectors of the police stated, that she said at the

station-house that the father was a journeyman baker. Mr. Hobler observed, that somebody ought to take the matter up. The Lord Mayor said, since the passing of the New Poor-Law it seems to be considered that children, when they are born, are to be treated as kittens are treated. Unfortunate women, who are in a way to become mothers, seem to think that they are to deliver themselves as they can, and to get rid of their infants as soon as possible. This is a most frightful impression. Mr. Hobler said, that many women certainly appeared to be influenced by that opinion.—The Lord Mayor: They deliver themselves as they please, and throw their infants into the privy or into the river, and no prosecutor appears. Prisoner, have you anything to say?—Prisoner: Nothing, my Lord.—The Lord Mayor: Is the surgeon here to give evidence?—Beadle: No, I am not aware that he is.—The Lord Mayor: Nobody appears to think anything of the business, serious as it is. I, however, consider it to be my duty to commit the woman to take her trial at the Central Criminal Court. In past times the parish officers used to prosecute in cases of this kind—now, it seems there are no funds with which to prosecute, and desperate offences of this description may be committed with comparative impunity. If the New Poor-Law is to be revised and altered, surely power ought to be given to the parish officers to prosecute persons guilty of disposing of their offspring in so shocking a manner. If the lives of children are to be preserved a change of this sort must take place. Mr. Hobler agreed with his Lordship, that an important change should be made as regarded illegitimate children. It appeared to be very extraordinary that so much money should be expended in paying those who worked the Bill, and that forty or fifty shillings should be grudged where human life was concerned.—The Lord Mayor: It is most extraordinary, that Commissioners, and Assistant-Commissioners, and Clerks, should have £54,000 per annum amongst them for carrying the New Poor-Law into effect, and yet that a parish should not be allowed as much as twenty



shillings to prosecute, in order to prevent the practice of flinging poor children into destruction the moment they are born. There have been many destroyed since this law came into operation, more than we have ever heard of, I am convinced. Now the matter seems to be of ordinary occurrence. In this case, if the prisoner had not been very ill, and the mistress had not entertained suspicion of her, we never should have heard a word about it. The parties would never have thought of looking in the place where it was found. The effect of the example is really frightful; we must have the surgeon's evidence, and I shall commit the prisoner for trial, and the Court, I am sure, will, under such circumstances, most readily pay the expenses. His lordship then ordered that the surgeon who examined the body of the infant should be required to attend and give evidence."—*August 13, 1839.*

"The increase of instances of astardy since the introduction of the New Poor-Law in Hereford, city and shire, is beyond the libertine's and Melbournite's warmest and most villainous wishes. It is really piteous to meet so many of the daughters of humble life—young—unmarried, but burdened with the consequences of their shame—rather of man's shame, and the infamous enactment under which they suffer, and have been seduced. But facts. Not long ago a girl, then an inmate of the Hereford Bastile, took and secreted a piece of cheese under her armpits, whence, after undergoing not the *most delicate investigation*, it was taken, and she for the offence (?) was sentenced to an incarceration in the horrid deadhouse which forms part of the Hereford paupericide establishment. When questioned why she took the cheese, she said (being in the family way), she longed for it. They then asked her who was the father of her child, but she refused to tell them—*only he was a married man, the father of nine children, and that at the same time with herself there was another girl enciente by him!!!*"—*G. R. Wythen Baxter*, March, 1841.

"Sir R. Peel presented a petition from the Guardians of the Poor-Law Union at Tamworth, stating, that for the most part they approved of the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill, but they complained of the demoralizing effect of the Bastardy clauses. They stated that the number of illegitimate children baptized in their district in the two years after the passing of the

Poor-Law Amendment-Act was *double* what it had been in the three years before."—*House of Commons*, March 29, 1841. [And yet Sir R. Peel supports and eulogizes the clause which is thus working seduction and infanticide under his very *nostrils!* Well, for what were eyes given but to see with; ears, but to hear with; and hearts, but to make us feel? And yet the proprietor of Tamworth town will make no such use of these organs!—*G. R. W. B.*]

"Sir,—I take the liberty to address you on the annexed clauses of 'the Bill for the amendment and better administration of the Laws relating to the Poor in England and Wales,' and to express the opinions of the overseers of Sheffield on the subject.

"It would appear, from the Commissioners' Report, that the 69th and following clauses are introduced for the purpose of effecting greater morality on the part of the female, and a saving to the parish by a discontinuance of relief to illegitimate children. This is to be done by,—

"1st, Relieving the putative father from liability, and both father and mother from punishment; 2dly, By requiring the mother to maintain her illegitimate offspring; and, 3dly, By extending the liability of the mother to her parents.

"It is presumed, that these clauses will not have the effect of reducing the number of illegitimate children; for, although they may have a tendency to make the female more cautious, they encourage the man to be less so; and it is well known, that of the two parties the man is, generally speaking, more afraid of consequences at present than his guilty partner.

"It may be said, that the alteration will prevent a great deal of perjury; probably it may, in some degree, but I am convinced that false swearing is less frequent in this part of the country than is generally supposed; and further, that the abandoned female who would fix an innocent man with the maintenance of her child, would not hesitate to commit infanticide. The Commissioners who recommend the present measures, appear to rely mainly on the liability of the mother and the parents as a preventive; this, we are afraid, will not effect the object. In the cases receiving relief for their illegitimate children in Sheffield, and which, by-the-by, is not sufficient to maintain them, not one mother in six is in a situation to

provide wholly for the child, and not one grandparent (on the mother's side) in twenty would be found to be 'competent' and liable to an order under the statute of Elizabeth; consequently, the greater part of the illegitimate children would be chargeable to the parish, and the mother would not be liable to punishment even if she had a dozen bastards. In a pecuniary point of view, it might be easily shown that the alteration would occasion considerable loss to this borough. We are at present paying, in the township of Sheffield, about £1,400 per annum, and receiving £1,200 from the fathers, and the liability of the mothers and grandparents, in all probability, would not reduce the expenditure more than £200 or £300. The other townships bearing their proportion, the loss to the borough may be estimated at £1,500 annually.

"I will now shortly express the feeling of the overseers of the township of Sheffield (and I might, I believe, add that of the borough), that the 'repeal of the laws, requiring the fathers of illegitimate children to provide for their maintenance, and thus casting the burden thereof, in the first instance, on the mother, and in the case of her inability, on the parish, is unjust in principle, because it taxes one of the delinquent parties only, is calculated to encourage licentiousness in men, and to add very materially to the parochial burden; whilst the female, deprived of assistance, and left to struggle with poverty, might be tempted to relieve herself from the effects of her frailty by the destruction of her offspring.'

"If such are your sentiments, I make no doubt that you will throw impediments in the way of these clauses becoming the law of the land, as may appear to you the most advisable under the circumstances.

"I beg pardon for troubling you with this letter, and am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"GEORGE CROSSLAND,  
"Vestry Clerk.

"Sheffield, May, 1834."

"To the Editor of Buckingham's

"Parliamentary Review."

THE GOOD BISHOP.—"The Bishop of Exeter gave notice, that on the third reading of the Poor-Law Bill he would move that the Bastardy clauses be omitted."—*House of Lords*, Aug. 4, 1834.

THE BASTARDY CLAUSES' VICTIM.—"The wretched woman, Celia Tippins,

who was convicted at our late assizes for the murder of her child, under very distressing circumstances, has become quite insane, and on Wednesday last Captain Mason, the Governor of our county gaol, received an order to remove her at once to the Gloucester Lunatic Asylum."—*Gloucester Journal*, May 9, 1840.

"Petitions to both Houses of Parliament are now in the course of signature in the various Poor-Law Unions of the country, praying that the indecent manner of affiliating illegitimate children in open court, at the quarter-sessions, may be erased from the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill; and that it be transferred in a less objectionable form to the magistrates in petty sessions, where the characters of the parties can be better investigated. The petitioners declare that, from the disgusting and immoral disclosures usually made, the Guardians prefer taking applicants and their children into the workhouse to compelling the heartless father to support his offspring."—*Hereford Journal*, Jan., 1839.

"It may be readily admitted, that formerly many grievous hardships existed; that a woman of bad character, by an appeal to the laws, could enforce payment for the support of her child from an individual who might be innocent (but here, let it be understood, the sufferer had the power of disapproval). How has the present amendment rectified this evil? Has it honestly probed the wound? Has it made seduction a statutable offence? Has it visited the offence upon the offending party? Not so. It suffers man, too often the cause of wrong, to go unpunished; whilst it entails the entire burden of disgrace upon woman, the weaker vessel; and leaves her unfriended, at a time when she most requires assistance. We know *who* has asked the question—'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?' And, unhappily, we can answer—Yes. When driven by the pangs of want—refused admittance to that shelter upon which she had *some* claim—an object of pity, even to those who are used to the sight of suffering—an outcast, amidst a city rolling in wealth—she resolved (madly, we will hope), when nature could no longer afford sustenance for her babe, to save it from a life of misery, like her own, by committing MURDER! I care not what may have been her character. As a child of misfortune, she needed the greater pity;



and, if this example shake the delicacy of any who peruse it, I would only add, in the words of HIM who was purity itself, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her'—*The English Poor-Law Considered, by the Rev. J. V. Austin.*

“‘The following petition,’ said the *Hereford County Press* of Jan 19, 1839, ‘is in course of signature in the parish of Almeley, Herefordshire, and has already been signed by the vicar, the churchwardens, and other influential persons.’

“To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled :

“We, the undersigned, the Minister, Guardian, Churchwardens, Overseers, Proprietors, and Inhabitants of the parish of Almeley, in the county of Hereford, viewing with alarm the heavy burden which is likely to fall on property, from the whole expense of illegitimate children, together with the mothers, almost in every case, being incurred by parishes, entreat permission, in preferring to your honourable House, this our humble petition, to state the evils which appear to your petitioners to arise from the difficulty, certain expense, and public disgusting indelicacy attending affiliations at Quarter-sessions, according to the 72d and following clauses of the late Act of the 4 & 5 Wm. IV., intituled, ‘An Act for the Amendment and better Administration of the Laws relating to the Poor in England and Wales.’

“1st. Your petitioners have seen, that men of profligate and dissolute habits (knowing that parishes are deterred by the above reasons from ever attempting affiliation), frequent cottages, and endeavour to seduce inexperienced, simple girls from the path of virtue ; such men feeling convinced that they can so act with impunity.

“2nd. Your petitioners have seen, that parishes, foreseeing the enormous certain expense to be incurred, almost universally, without any attempt to affiliate the child, send both mother and child to the Union workhouse, where both are fed and clothed at the expense of the industrious farmer and tradesman ; that, consequently, the moral and good are mulcted, whilst the immoral and evil go free. And that, although the bastardy cases *made public* are less numerous than

before the passing of the late Act, the expenses falling upon the parishes from bastardy are, notwithstanding, *much increased.*

“3rd. Your petitioners feel assured, that the disgusting facts which are necessarily publicly exposed during attempts to affiliate at the Quarter-sessions, where many persons of both sexes are present, tend much to corrupt and demoralize the minds of the audience.

“Your petitioners having viewed all these things with alarm, humbly pray your honourable House, to take the above-mentioned clauses into consideration, with the view of removing the order of affiliation from the Quarter-sessions to the petty-sessions, where the magistrates present are more likely to know the circumstances of the case, and the real character of the persons ; where the examination will be less public, and therefore less injurious to morals ; and where witnesses, &c., can be collected with much less expense to all parties (at the same time granting a power of appeal to the Quarter-sessions to either party aggrieved by the decision), or at least of making such an amendment as may seem to your honourable House most likely to obviate the evils complained of. And your petitioners will ever pray, &c.”

“EXTRAORDINARY DECISION OF THE POOR-LAW COMMISSIONERS.—It is generally known to our intelligent readers, that at the close of the last session of Parliament an act passed to enable justices of the peace in petty-sessions to make orders for the support of bastard children. This Act was hailed with great satisfaction throughout the kingdom, as it promised to relieve parishes from the great expense of applying to the Quarter-sessions, for the purpose of affiliating illegitimate children. The words of the preamble exhibit the intention of the legislature :—‘Whereas it is expedient to give more speedy and effectual means for obtaining orders upon the putative fathers of bastard children for their support and maintenance,’ &c. Under the expectation of thus more speedily and effectually obtaining an order upon a putative father, a parish in the county of Gloucester lately applied to the Board of Guardians to take the necessary measures for bringing the case before the local magistrates, when the Guardian was told, that it would be necessary for the mother to reside the whole seven years in the workhouse, at an expense of 2s. 9d.

weekly, if the father was called upon to contribute 1s. 6d. per week towards the support of the bastard child. This appeared to be so strange a mode of rendering orders upon putative fathers more speedy and effectual, that an application was made to the Commissioners on the subject. The reply was in these words, dated February the 13th, 1840:—"With regard to the case of the woman, the Commissioners need scarcely remind you, that it is the policy of the law, with a view to the discouragement of bastardy, to render mothers of bastards liable to maintain their offspring, and to avoid calling for the interference of parish officers in such cases, unless the inability of the mother to support her bastard be established. The Commissioners are of opinion, that out-relief given to a woman affords no test of her inability to support her bastard, but acts as an encouragement to vice; and they entertain the strongest conviction, not merely on general reasons, but as the result of extended experience, that a strict adherence to the principle of a new law, of obliging mothers to exert themselves to maintain their illegitimate offspring, will diminish immorality. E. CHADWICK." The Commissioners here avow, that, under their direction and sanction, parishes are to be taxed to the amount of 2s. 9d. for the support of the mother before they can recover of the father the usual payment of 1s. 6d. per week for maintaining the child—an extraordinary mode of carrying out the intentions of the legislature, and rendering the obtaining orders upon putative fathers more speedy and effective.—*Champion*, March 1, 1840.

"On Wednesday last, at the meeting of the Board, Mr. Wainhouse in the chair, two letters were read announcing that Mr. Power, Assistant-Commissioner over this Union, had been removed to another district; and that Mr. Mott succeeded him. The auditor (Mr. Barker) announced his audit of the quarterly accounts for all the townships except Halifax; which he had again refused to audit, on account of the

Overseers not having given in the particulars of the constables' accounts. He stated also that the salary of Mr. Highley, the Assistant-Overseer, would be disallowed, as before, until the requisite documents were produced. He also read a letter from the Poor-Law Commissioners, requesting that affidavits of this disobedience to their orders should be sent up to them, with a view to obtain a *mandamus* against the Overseers. The enormous loss to the Union by the operation of the Bastardy clause, then occupied the attention of the Board. W. Briggs, Esq., (*ex officio*) took an active part, and he and Mr. Peel (of Shelf) examined the Relieving Officers and Assistant-Overseers respecting the bastardy arrears, &c. As an instance of the frightful importance of this subject, we may state, that one of the Relieving Officers had paid £97 in respect of bastard children within one quarter, of which sum only about £11 or £12 had been repaid by the putative fathers. Measures were recommended in order, if possible, to compel the putative fathers to contribute according to the orders made on them, at so much cost to the respective townships. Another call was made upon the respective townships; and its excess over former calls excited the fears of the Assistant-Overseers, who express themselves almost utterly unable to raise the sum. The call for Halifax is *more than one thousand pounds*; the rest in proportion."—*Halifax Guardian*, Dec. 31, 1840.

"I cannot forbear remarking, in reference to the Bastardy clause, that, in a late conversation with the coroner for the western division of this county, I learned that he had held seven inquests on newly-born children, within the space of eight months, in his district. He admitted that he attributed this enormous increase of infanticide to the operation of the New Poor-Law, and that, notwithstanding a *reprimand* he had received from the Commissioners, he had repeated his conviction to the jury."—*Mr. Jonathan Toogood's (of Bridgewater) Letter in the "Times,"* dated March 2, 1841.



## MORTALITY IN THE BASTILES.

CETHEGUS.—“The ragged Charon fainted,  
And ask'd a navy, rather than a boat,  
To ferry over the sad world that came.”—JONSON'S CATALINE.

“Murder, stern murder, in the dir'st degree.”—RICHARD III., Act 5, s. 4.

“We have a new Bastile here, of which the walls are so damp, that the inmates are dying of the black fever. Five were

buried on Sunday, and four some days before.”—*Leicestershire Correspondent in the “Champion,”* Feb. 16, 1840.

“In the Dewsbury Union, containing an average of 76 female inmates, the following deaths have occurred :—

1839.—Nov. 4...	Mary Lee .....	aged 20 years...	Childbed-fever & Erysypelas.
10...	Sarah Parker .....	53 “	...Erysypelas and Fever.
11...	William Lee ...	22 days	...Convulsions.
16...	Fanny Bedford .....	83 years	...Old age.
29...	Mary Haigh .....	75 “	...Asthma.
Dec. 1...	Mary Blakely .....	60 “	...Erysypelas.
3...	Sarah Barraclough .	60 “	...Ditto.
5...	Hannah Sykes .....	62 “	...Exhaustion.
18...	Judith Kaye .....	56 “	...Fever.
19...	Nancy Cleg .....	42 “	...Erysypelas and Fever.
23...	Elizabeth Beevers...	52 “	...Ditto.
23...	Rachael Ellis .....	56 “	...Fits.
1840.—Jan. 18...	Mary Smith .....	83 “	...Natural decay.
18...	Mary Stockwell .....	54 “	...Fever and Erysypelas.

Here we have fourteen deaths, seven of them the victims of contagious disease, within two months, whose lives might, in all human probability, have been spared, had they been allowed to remain in their comparatively thinly-populated parish workhouses.”—*Champion*, March 8, 1840.

“At Coventry, the state of the poor was most deplorable. Fever had broken out in the workhouse, 84 of the wretched inmates had died in January, in consequence of which, a public meeting had been held, and a deputation appointed to examine the cause of the sickness in the workhouse, but they were refused admission.”—*Lord Teynham at the Crown and Anchor*, Feb. 9, 1838.

“In Rye churchyard lie the bodies of the twenty children, who died in twenty-four days, as the sexton informed me, out of the ‘county,’ viz., Union-house.”—*Extract from Mr. John Perceval's Letter to Mr. Oastler, dated from Hastings*, Nov. 27, 1838.

“A gentleman I met at Hastings, said to me, ‘I acknowledge there is one thing that I should think the paupers would not like—so many of them die—I wonder that they can bear to see one another drop off. I suppose the number of deaths may be accounted for by low and unaccustomed diet.’”—*Mr. John Perceval's Letter*, May 11, 1838.

“He had lately seen in the London

papers, that sixty deaths had taken place in the Bridgewater Union workhouse, within the short space of twenty-six days; and he could not rid his mind of the impression, that these poor paupers must have been poisoned. They had already heard from a person from Oxford, that the paupers, in that Union, complained that with the ‘skilly’ their mouths were sore and their teeth loose.”—*Mr. Oastler in the “Northern Star,”* April 21, 1838.

“Mr. Davies, watchmaker, of Todmorden, then addressed the meeting. \* \* \* \* He said, that in Coventry, where he came from, seventy-three deaths had taken place in the Union workhouse since the 25th of March last.”—*Anti-Poor-Law Meeting reported in the “Northern Star,”* July 14, 1838.

“At a meeting of the parishioners of St. Mary's, Lambeth, Mr. Fall said, ‘Upon an average of two years he found the number of inmates was about 682 a-year; of these, 393 had died, making an average of deaths of  $28\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. per annum. (Shame, shame.) Well might they say they had lessened the poor-rates,

when they starved the poor. Ninety-one old women were sent to an old house, with a peck of coals in each room, and no candle, and the gruel, which was not better than pigwash, was sent a quarter-of-a-mile in pails, and the result was, that typhus fever had in a short time carried off *sixty-one* out of that number." (*Cries of 'Murder!'*)—*Weekly Dispatch*, April 22, 1838.

"It is publicly stated, that the hospitals in London are now so *glutted with dead bodies*, that they refuse to take them in."—*Mr. Samuel Roberts's "Letter to Lord Brougham,"* 1838.

"I see that the '*Ipswich Journalist*,' who, by-the-by, is no Poor-Law advocate, has been *requested* to state, that the poor of Hoxne Union have no cause to complain of medical insufficiency, intending that the whole Poor-Law press should copy the paragraph. I will just say, that I do not understand what it means by 697 persons '*treated*' in 1837; but I do understand, that for 680 cases cured, *forty-three* cases have ended fatally; that is *one in sixteen!* Whether this is a *fair average mortality* I do not know."—"*Letters of a Suffolk Juror*," 1838.

"How far the number of deaths in St. George's (Southwark) workhouse was increased in 1837, in consequence of keeping the people, who were principally old, upon cold water, as a substitute for beer, and that during the inclement weather of the winter, it may be impossible to say; but one of the medical officers, constantly visiting the workhouse, has declared the water to be thick and bad, and unfit for a beverage. The number of deaths from the 25th of March, 1837, to the 25th of March, 1838, was no less than 161 out of an average number in the 'house' of about 450; whilst the previous year, during the corresponding four quarters, they were only 103. This *great increase* and large average number of deaths, per cent., would probably call for an inquiry in the Penitentiary, but in workhouses it appears to excite no surprise, nor to call forth any sympathy towards the unfortunate, afflicted, and innocent poor, who, there is too much reason to believe, are *dieted and tested* out of the world."—*Day's "Practical Observations on the New Poor-Law."*

"One gentleman, a likely one to help another out of a 'scrape,' went lately to the poor woman, whose child died so queerly. 'How come you to talk about the neglect of your child; you ought to

remember, that the Union surgeon has a great deal to do.' An ugly blow that. That is 'the unkindest cut of all.' A great deal to do!!!"—*The "Suffolk Juror,"* 1838.

"Two young women went into one of these Bastiles to lay in. One of them was put to bed on the Saturday, and the other on the Sunday. One mother and child were *soon both buried* in the same grave, the child one day and the mother the next, or thereabouts..... So that, before another Sunday, the *four were dead!* and all in one short week! Two lads, very young and racketty, who were at that time with the Union, or house-surgeon, were the medical attendants, and, *of course*, their master—perhaps when the poor creatures were dying or near it. The Governor said to an old man, who afterwards told me of the circumstance—"No one can say they were not well attended to; for they had three doctors." 'Yes,' said the old man, '*Two boys and a fool, practising their experiments.* But I will take care they shall not practise them on me, for I will never take any of their stuff.' I think these two poor young women were the first that went into the Bastile I speak of; and I believe, so help me God, if they had been allowed to have remained with their mothers or friends, in their own cottages, in the usual way, they would both, with their little babes, all four would have been alive now!"—*From a Correspondent of the Author's, describing the working of the New Poor-Law in a Southern County.*

"The deaths in the Ampthill workhouse had been quite frightful."—*Mr. Fielden's Speech*, Feb. 20, 1838.

"A few days ago, a friend of ours was complaining in a public room in Rochester, that the aged poor, in a place not far from Maidstone, were rapidly dying off under the rigours of the pauper prisons, when a young, bushy-wiskered dandy—a *Whig*, *of course*—exclaimed, 'Oh, what's the consequence of a parcel of old women dying off—they are better out of the world than in it—their bones are only fit to be burnt for manure!!!' 'Pray, Sir,' said our friend, 'is your mother alive?' 'She is.' 'Well, then, suppose we starve her to death, scorch her bones, and spread them on your father's land.' 'My mother, Sir, is a *lady*,' cried Whiskerandos. 'No doubt,' rejoined the other, 'and, therefore, her bones must be all the richer. But I do not learn that she has any particular claims on the esteem of the



country. Indeed (looking the other full in the face), I cannot *perceive* that she has produced *anything* worth preserving."—*Weekly Dispatch*, Feb. 21, 1836.

"Deaths in Union-houses, I cannot in any way ascertain. But, if I may judge by their treatment, I should say the deaths of infants, at least, if not of others also, have much increased."—*Extract of a Letter to the Author, from the Rev. C. Fowell Watts (of Bath)*, dated Oct. 23, 1840.

"A return of the number of inmates and of deaths, at stated periods of three months, in every Union workhouse, including how many were buried, and *how many were cut up*, since their establishment, would be a very useful document. We should then see the proportion of deaths, &c., and thus be able to guess how many *murders* are daily committed to keep up rents."—*Mr. Oastler's Letter to the "Northern Star,"* July 6, 1838.

"I believe there is a secret number sleeping in their graves, through the neglect and cruel treatment of Relieving Officers."—"Observations on the Administration of the New Poor-Law in Nottingham," by W. Roworth, Esq., Mayor, published Nov., 1840.

"The *in-door test*, as it is put in operation, is working *disease and death* in numbers."—*Ibid.*

"How many have died from neglect, it is not for me to say; though it appears, that human life is but little cared for by some persons; for when a kind individual took an orphan child up to the Union-house, she was told to 'go home and mind her own business, what did it signify to her whether the child *lived or died*.'"—*Ibid.*

"Deaths of convicts in the hulks, per cent. per annum . 2.3

Deaths of convicts in the Penitentiary . . . . . 2.5

Deaths in the Bridgewater Union workhouse . . . . . 41.4"

—*Lords' Poor-Law Committee Report*, p. 909.

"Where there is a duke, or a lord, for Chairman of the Guardians, they can contrive to kill them off much faster than where they have only common plebian scoundrels to take the lead as Guardians."

—"The Rev. Dr. Pye Smith and the New Poor-Law," by Samuel Roberts.

"We have all, I apprehend, when children, been terrified with astonishment and horror on reading of the mercenary cruelty of the unfeeling guardian uncle

to the *Babes in the Wood*, who, to get possession of their property, exposed the poor helpless little innocents to be starved to death, or be devoured by wild beasts in the forest. This, indeed, is bad enough in the *retail way*, but what is it in extent, to the *hundreds and thousands* of innocent *babes in the Bastiles*, starved to death by noble Guardian-lords for the sake of obtaining a part of their pitiful portion? So numerous are these victims, that all the robin-redbreasts in the world would never be able to find leaves to cover their bodies."—*Mr. Samuel Roberts's Pamphlet to Lord Brougham.*

"Before the formation of the Union, the inmates of the Bridgewater workhouse were aged, infirm, or children; there was seldom an able-bodied person in the house. On taking the ages of the inmates when I was an overseer of the poor, I found that the ages of the first thirty on the list averaged more than 74 years each; and that those thirty persons were more than 70 years of age, on the average, before they were taken into the workhouse. Thus these poor old creatures had worked out their 'threescore years and ten.' They were kindly treated, properly, but frugally fed, and allowed a small quantity of beer daily.

"In August, 1836, all their little indulgencies were stopped, and the Commissioners' dietary regulations rigidly enforced. The medical return then was—'Inmates generally healthy.' On the 27th of September, the following return was made to the Board of Guardians by the visiting Committee:—'The aged poor are afflicted with cholic and diarrhœa, and the children suffering from the same complaints.' On the 25th of October, the medical attendant wrote to the Board, stating that he had watched the result of the dietary, and that it was producing diarrhœa. He was told that the general dietary was no concern of his; that he was to attend to the sick, and that only. In his evidence before the Lords' Committee, this gentleman stated, that he was obliged to keep a common astringent mixture in the house to enable the poor to keep their food in their bowels for a short time.

"The disease rapidly passed into that state of infectious dysentery which was so fatal in the Milbank Penitentiary, when the water-gruel experiment was tried on the convicts there. In this state the workhouse and the gruel were set up as a

'test of destitution' against the poor of the 40 parishes which comprise the Bridgewater Union. The representations of the medical attendant were backed by the visiting Committee, but without effect. An active and humane member of that Committee deposed as follows:—"The number of deaths which occurred, and the generally unhealthy state of the inmates, were so alarming, that I was induced to apply to the clerk of the Board for information on the usual mortality of the house during the many years that he had the care of it as Assistant Overseer. This information I obtained, and took it to the Board, and, with the 'death-book' in my hand, contrasted the few deaths under the old system, with the awful number recorded in the obituary of the Board. I implored the Guardians not to send any more paupers into the house while so dangerous a disease prevailed there; but to no purpose. The reply given was, that the law must be carried into effect as far as possible; and that the house would hold still more, according to the report made of it when taken for the union."

"At this time the house, which was set up as a 'test of destitution,' under the New Poor-Law, against the helpless poor of 40 parishes, was in such an infectious state, that the surgeon warned the visiting Committee against going into the apartments. The surgeon was infected; the governor's family were infected; the governor was infected several times, and at length obtained leave of absence. Neither nurses nor servants could be prevailed upon to enter the house. Still these Guardians of the poor, who durst not go round the house themselves, ordered 127 helpless persons, in whose deaths they had a pecuniary interest, into the workhouse during the period of disease and infection! This destructive system was wilfully persevered in, in spite of reiterated applications, and the testimony of the death-book weekly exhibited from the 25th of October, 1836, to the 21st of April, 1837, when a vast number of helpless persons had been destroyed, and of those who were suffering under the disease when the dietary was changed, ten died in the course of the year.

"Such, Sir, were the leading circumstances of this awful case. The doctrine had been formally propounded at the Board 'that not even a whisper on its proceedings should be permitted to escape the lips of the Guardians out of doors,' and 'that we should rather seem to think

aloud than to speak.' I protested against so skulking and cowardly a course, and avowed my unalterable determination of appealing to the public on the transactions of that Board, in any manner which, on due deliberation, I might consider most likely to be effective in drawing the attention of my countrymen to the injuries inflicted on the poor. Acting on this determination, I published a detailed statement of the foregoing facts, which was republished in the *Times* newspaper; upon which the Poor-Law Commissioners directed the Guardians of the Union, and the Assistant-Commissioner of the district, to institute an inquiry into the crimes which they were thus charged with having committed. Strongly impressed with the pernicious character of such a vile mockery, and convinced that its only possible corrective was the public voice, I addressed the following letter to the Poor-Law Commissioners:—

"Bridgewater, July 29, 1837.

"Gentlemen,—I learn by the inclosed letter, from the clerk to the Bridgewater Union, that Mr. Weale, Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, has been directed by you to institute an inquiry into the allegations contained in a pamphlet published by me, purporting to be some account of the working of the New Poor-Law in the Bridgewater Union.

"It is alleged, in the pamphlet to be so inquired into, that many of our unfortunate fellow-creatures have been brought to an untimely death in the Bridgewater workhouse. An inquiry on so grave a charge cannot, it is submitted, be conducted to a satisfactory termination with closed doors; neither can the ends of public justice be so attained; with this conviction I take leave respectfully to request that you will be pleased to issue such directions as will prevent the public from being excluded during the progress of the inquiry.

"I am, Gentlemen,

"Your obedient, humble servant,

"JOHN BOWEN.

"To the Poor-Law Commissioners for England and Wales."

"To this respectful request for an open inquiry, the Commissioners refused to accede; and it was afterwards discovered, by a letter printed by order of the House of Lords, that Mr. Weale, the Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, had conspired with some of the Somerset-house authorities to frustrate the avowed object of the inquiry which he was paid for conducting. In this letter, addressed to one of the Commissioners, Weale, after stating some gross and shameless falsehoods, says, 'the large majority of the Guardians are favourable to us,' that is, favourable to the Commissioners and their train; and he urges this amiable partiality, in proof of its being



'desirable' that he 'should request the attendance of the Guardians' on an inquiry into a charge of a vast number of the helpless poor having been brought to an untimely death in a Union workhouse under the management of these very Guardians. This infamous suggestion was literally adopted, and the parties who had been instrumental in killing off so many of the helpless poor, went through the vile farce of sitting in judgment, with closed doors, on themselves, and with the 'death book' and the 'medical report' staring them in the face, they gravely returned a verdict of 'Not Guilty.' The Somerset-house authorities received the verdict of self-acquittal with expressions of their 'satisfaction with the investigation made by the Board,' and requested that 'they may be furnished with copies of the depositions!' Thus they acknowledge their utter ignorance of the matter, with which they avow themselves perfectly satisfied! Having made the criminal parties judges in their own case, and smothered up the enormities charged, under the cloak of a secret inquiry, they commit themselves to an unqualified approval of the 'investigation,' and then ask for a sight of the evidence!

"The impunity thus established by authority, for even fatal outrages, if committed in a Union workhouse, on the helpless poor, led to other crimes of an equally atrocious character. A number of poor old men were carried off in the course of a few days by a pestilential disease caught from a vagrant who was put into the room while he was suffering under typhus fever, and considered past recovery. In this hopeless condition he was placed among the helpless old inmates of the workhouse, who had no opportunity of escaping beyond the reach of infection. The awful destruction of human life which followed this wanton act was smothered up by false entries in so criminal a manner, that the records of the Board did not contain any reference to the existence of this formidable disease. Out of eleven consecutive deaths in the workhouse, only two entries were made in the column provided for the 'Nature of Disease;' the other nine were surreptitiously filled up three months afterwards, when the particulars of the cases had been published by me in the *Times* newspaper. Thus a number of poor helpless creatures, after a long life of labour, were immured beyond the reach of public control, exposed to the poison of malignant fever, and then passed

to their graves without a reckoning, under the cover of false entries. The horrible deaths of these poor victims, and the fraudulent entries, were fully proved before the Lords' Committee; but no steps have hitherto been taken thereon.

"Awful and ominous as these events are, they are not the only results of the Somerset-house system. At a still later period, the workhouse was known to be ravaged by typhus fever, and other highly infectious diseases, and while it was in that condition, in the midst of a most severe season, with an average of 50 on the sick-list, it was enforced as a test of destitution against 203 of the suffering poor, mostly the families of agricultural labourers, whose general wages are only 7s. a week, and who, therefore, could have had no means of providing against an exigency. 128 of the applicants preferred the chance of famishing, begging, or pilfering, out of the house, to the more immediate destruction by pestilence, which threatened them within.

"The wretched condition of those who, even under such circumstances, were forced to accept the 'workhouse test of destitution,' may be inferred from the following extracts from the deposition of Drusilla Winn, a poor woman, who was subjected to the 'test,' with four small children. She deposed,—

"That she principally supported herself by washing, and had been receiving from the Board, for herself and four children, under seven and a-half years of age, 4s. 6d. per week.

"That on the usual day of pay she was told the whole of the 4s. 6d. was taken off, and an order made for her to go into the Union-house; she did not get her week's pay.

"That her children were in perfect health at the time she went into the Union-house.

"That her eldest child, seven and a-half years of age, was immediately taken from her, and she thinks he was very unhappy.

"That his first complaint to her was of a pain in his head. After remaining in bed for two days, the nurse drove him down the staircase without shoes or stockings, through the chapel, which was wet, having just been washed, saying he was not ill.

"That the schoolmaster, who is very kind to the children, immediately carried him back to his bed. He never got out of it after. He died in a few days.

“‘That she does not know why he died; the doctor never told her. He was in the fever-ward.

“‘That she does not know why the second child died; the doctor did not say.

“‘That the doctor said, the third child died from inflammation of the lungs.

“‘That she then left the house with her only child, who was very ill, and had on a blister under each ear.’

“Such was the operation of the ‘work-house test,’ in little more than two months, on one wretched family! During this period, 29 widows and deserted women, and 95 helpless children, were subjected to the ‘test,’ while the house was ravaged to such an extent by pestilential diseases, that the deaths within the walls of the workhouse were to the deaths in the registrar’s district without the walls in the proportion of 25 to one! And remember, Sir, this compendious slaughter did not take place in Central Africa, or in the hold of a slave-ship; but in that division of the county of Somerset of which you are a representative, and under that very Poor-Law which you are so strenuously supporting in the House of Commons.

“I have now brought before you three distinct series of destructive outrages committed on the necessitous, into the particulars of which I court the most searching inquiry, and defy any contradiction which can be openly met. It has been shown,—

“1. That a deadly disease ravaged the Bridgewater Union workhouse similar to the fatal dysentery which swept off the convicts in the Penitentiary when the water-gruel experiment was tried there, and that, although the disease in the workhouse was ascribed by the medical officers to the Commissioners’ gruel, the dietary was obstinately persevered in for five months; during which period the disease became so highly infectious and fatal, that the Guardians durst not go round the house; still, as vacancies were created by death or otherwise, they sent into this pesthouse, to be gruelled, a constant stream of helpless victims, in whose deaths they had a pecuniary interest.

“2. That at a subsequent period, a vagrant, in an advanced stage of typhus fever, was wilfully placed among the aged poor, a considerable number of whom caught this formidable disease and died. An attempt was made to conceal this destruction of the poor by a series of

omissions and false entries, in which the existence of typhus fever is never once alluded to; some of which false entries, although bearing date in November and December, were not actually made until the following March, thus consummating a series of cruel homicides by fraudulent concealment, and an audacious falsification of public records.

“3. At a still later period, in the depth of a most severe season, when the workhouse was known to be ravaged by typhus-fever, and other pestilential diseases, with an average of 50 on the sick-list, more than 200 persons, above half of whom were widows and children, were ‘ordered to the workhouse’ as a ‘test of destitution,’ when the deaths within that house were to the deaths without, in the frightful proportion of 25 to one! Of one poor family, who were in a healthy condition when they were forced, by utter destitution, to accept the ‘test,’ three children out of four were carried off by the prevailing pestilence, and the fourth was removed from the house apparently in a dying state.”—*Mr. Bowen’s (of Bridgewater) Letter to — Sanford, Esq., M. P., May 8, 1841.*

“The Poor-Law Commissioners have never given Parliament any data whereby the influence of the workhouses on the mortality of the poor can be determined. They have published sanatory reports on the state of Whitechapel, and of various unhealthy parts of the country, but have never entered their own workhouses, where the mortality has been 500 or 600 per cent. higher than in the worst parts of towns. They have never told Parliament—nor, we believe, the Government—how many of the inmates of the workhouses perish annually—what is the mortality of the aged and infirm, the children, the able-bodied men and women, confined in the workhouses, as compared with that of the same classes out of doors. They have never answered these questions, which fall immediately within their province, and have a direct bearing on the exclusive workhouse system of relief, which they advocate. The select committee on the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, ordered a return of the deaths in the workhouses, during the year 1837. The part of the return including ten metropolitan and a hundred provincial workhouses, was published in the Appendix to the Medical Evidence. There were 12,313 paupers in the workhouses, and



2,552 perished in that one year!!!!  
We have, therefore, the following scale of mortality:—

Annual deaths in a population of 1000.	
English prisons .....	16
——— hulks .....	28
——— hulks (crowded in 1840)	43
Whitechapel (1838).....	44
Hanwell Lunatic Asylum .....	120
English workhouses .....	207 (!!!)

The annual mortality was 18 per cent. in the country, and 29 per cent. in the ten London workhouses. There are many aged and infirm persons in the workhouses, and the criminals are young; but there are also many young persons and able-bodied adults in the workhouses; so that the tremendous mortality of 21 per cent. must, in great part, be ascribed to the confinement in-doors, and the starvation dietaries. We do not believe that the mortality of the same classes exceeds 7 per cent. out of doors; so that, at the lowest possible estimate, the mortality is doubled by the administration of relief in workhouses. If the workhouse test be universally applied—and out-door relief be abolished—one-third of the 580,000 paupers now living out of doors, in addition to the 98,000 at present under confinement, would, perhaps, find themselves necessitated to enter the workhouses, were, at the lowest rate, 18 per cent.—52,439 would perish every year, heart-broken, or poisoned by a contaminated atmosphere. The workhouse test cannot be worked at a sacrifice of less than 25,000 lives a-year. We shall be glad to see this disproved by facts; but, until the Commissioners shall prove that the mortality is not doubled in the workhouses, we do trust that Parliament will put a stop to the fearful experiment of the *workhouse test*, and enact the continuance of *out-door relief*.”—*Lancet*, April 10, 1841.

“In the month of February, 1839, a more than usual mortality took place in the workhouse of the Morpeth Union, situate in that town. Public attention was drawn to the matter; and at length it became generally known, that an elderly labouring man in the workhouse, of the name of William Hunter, had been unwell of a bowel complaint for some time; that his medical attendant, Mr. Robert Shute, had ordered him port wine; but this being considered too dear, he was given gooseberry wine instead, and the consequence was, the man soon died. About

the same time, a poor girl named Ann Thompson, aged 27, was dragged from her father’s roof, placed in this workhouse, and soon died of consumption. It became known that the medical attendant, Mr. Gibson, of the Morpeth Dispensary, had been brought before the Morpeth Board of Guardians, and publicly reprovved by that body, for having brought a piece of a tea-cake to this poor suffering creature to enable her to take her medicine! These facts roused public indignation; a meeting of the inhabitants was called at the Town-hall on the 27th of February, the house was crowded to suffocation, and the following resolution was passed without one dissentient voice:—

“That this meeting has very good reason for believing that a very improper system of diet and general treatment has, for some time past, prevailed in the Morpeth Union workhouse; that William Hunter, and Ann Thompson, recent inmates of that house, were cruelly treated, and their deaths were occasioned or accelerated by ill-usage; and that a coroner’s inquest is indispensably necessary to further the ends of justice.”

“I was the person appointed by this numerous and most respectable public meeting to convey this resolution to Mr. Russell, the coroner, who resides at Alnwick—a gentleman your lordship knows very well. The coroner, on the receipt of my letter conveying the resolution, immediately issued his precept for an inquest on the bodies of both paupers, the next day, at the Queen’s Head Inn, Morpeth. I attended, with a solicitor, to watch the case. Mr. Russell came, the jury was assembled; some hesitation or difficulty was expressed by the coroner about raising the bodies, which had been buried a few days. It was assize week at Newcastle, he had to be there that very day, and in consequence of this it was arranged, that he should consult about holding the inquest when at Newcastle, and give his decision as soon as possible. I went to Newcastle the next day, had an interview with Mr. Russell, the coroner, and he said that he had seen Mr. Bigge, of London, who thought it would be more advisable not to hold the inquest.

“Now, my Lord Howick, you know who this Mr. Bigge is. He is Chairman (and has been from its foundation) of the Morpeth Board of Guardians; he has been your bosom friend for many years; he has been the gentleman fixed on for your nomination at every election you have stood for in Northumberland; and, above all, it is very generally under-

stood, that he has been your constant correspondent respecting all the Poor-Law movements in the north of England. Your lordship must, therefore, have possessed a knowledge of these facts and public proceedings, connected with the cases of William Hunter and Ann Thompson, occurring, as they did, in that part of the county of Northumberland that your lordship represents. There is at this moment, an order of this Board, of which this Mr. Bigge is Chairman, 'that no medical man, shall be allowed to see a pauper but in the company of the Master or Matron of the workhouse.' I would advise you, my Lord, the next time you go among the 'gentlemen, magistrates, and farmers,' of your own county, to call at the Morpeth workhouse, and look at the Order-Book, and make inquiries how many poor creatures died there from November, 1838, till the end of February, 1839, just three months. Make this inquiry diligently and fairly. Look at the orders for making the soup, to be given without any bread: at the orders for the coffee—seven pints of water to one ounce of one-and-tenpenny coffee; inquire about your friend Mr. Bigge's great haste to get the dietary altered, when he found the public indignation steadily directed against this notable Board; and, above all things, my Lord, remember to do all this in a proper spirit, not being 'anxious to acquire a low and despicable popularity;' and then I shall be inclined to believe that you will come fully prepared with a stock of legislative wisdom to the next debate on this Poor-Law Bill that shall entitle you to be listened to with public attention." — *Blakey's Letter to Lord Howick*, "*Times*," April 7, 1841.

"When the execrable design was first mooted, the farmers, almost to a man, advocated the Bill, thinking it impossible that the atrocity of parting man and wife could have ever entered the heart of any man; but soon, alas! they found this was the case. One man, of the name of Henry Stapeley, was sent to gaol six or seven times; the first time, because he resisted the unmanly outrage of being separated from his wife and family; the second time, because, when he came out of gaol, he obtained sufficient work to keep himself, and would not go back to the Bastile, and was summoned to show cause why he ran away, and left his wife and family; and after he obtained his

discharge, he was brought back to his parish, and again consigned to the Bastile, whence he was again sent back to the House of Correction, because he persisted in cohabiting with his wife, and was thus bandied about to and from Lewes. When asked by the magistrates why he persisted in this obstinacy, he replied, that he would rather be in gaol than in the county house apart from his wife and family, because the work was very little harder, and the living infinitely better. This is by no means an isolated case. Death has been awfully busy among the inmates: one, two, three, and four persons, have lain dead in the house at a time. The medical officer has said, more than once, that the vile place was not near capacious enough to contain the suffering inmates in the slightest degree of comfort; that disease had raged, and most inevitably would rage, unless arrangements were speedily made to prevent it. One of the Guardians—a most humane man—has himself called it a system of slow, silent, and sly murder; and at the approaching annual election of Guardians, he will resign, declaring, in language that does him honour, that no man with a spark of humanity in his breast, can possibly act as Guardian, unless discretionary power be given him from the Commissioners to discriminate between the deserving poor and the idle and dissolute. One circumstance is worthy of mention. A poor man, of the name of Funnell, belonging to the parish of Laughton, applied for relief. He was presented with an order to go into the county house with his wife and three children. Necessity compelled him and them to go. The measles and the hooping-cough were raging dreadfully in the Bastile; mothers, weeping for the untimely loss of their innocent offspring, were to be met with at every turn. The poor creatures were admitted, and, in compliance with the barbarous edict of the Poor-Law Commissioners, separated. Two or three days subsequently, the children were seized with this shocking disorder, and, horrible to relate, the whole of poor Funnell's children lay dead in the House at one time. Hear this, ye daughters of luxury! and if ye have one spark of pity in your breasts, use your acknowledged influence with your fathers, husbands, and brothers, to have this infamous Bill blotted from the Statute book which it now disgraces." — *Weekly Dispatch*, March 18, 1838.



## NEW POOR-LAW MISCELLANIES.

### "THE DEATH OF LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S FIRST WIFE.

"One of their bitterest foes, and one of his most malignant destroyers—one of the rich traitors of this country—had lately been visited by Providence with the most distressing and mournful bereavement that any human being could sustain. He meant Lord John Russell, from whose side it had pleased God to take away the wife of his bosom. Now, mistake him not. Let no sneer, let no scowl, let no laugh arise even from the soul into which the iron has entered, and from which the spirit of vengeance has already arisen, and arrayed herself ready to go forth in righteous indignation. He warred not with the dead; he let them rest; for they and he must stand hereafter to their own master. Nor would he war with the living, when the living, by suffering and sorrow, were incapable of coming into the field, and entering into the lists with him. But Lord John Russell now sat in the weeds of a mourning widower, by the side of an empty bed, into which he looked, but where he could no longer see the lovely appearance even of death itself. His wife, whom he loved, and who was worthy of his love—his wife, the chosen one, the first in the world to his heart—his wife had been taken from him. Now he (Mr. Stephens) would put it to Lord John Russell—he would ask him solemnly, over that grave where he had so recently said, 'earth to earth, dust to dust, and ashes to ashes,' over that body that he fain would have held in his loved embrace until they should have departed together—he asked that weeping, mourning, oppressed husband, whether death was not a period soon enough for man and wife to be separated? (Hear, hear, hear, hear.) Was it not soon enough, he would ask him? Ay, that throbbing pulse, that pallid cheek, that bleeding, aching, broken heart, said, 'Oh, yes, it is soon enough, it is much too soon! Had God allowed us to live together yet longer, even always here upon earth together!' 'Now, my Lord,' said he, 'does not the poor man feel as keenly the pangs of separation as the rich man? (Hear, hear, hear.) Does not the pauper in the most wretched hovel

weep as briny tears, and send out sighs as strong, when he sits over, and looks upon the dead body of the wife of his heart, as royalty itself, with all its gaudy paraphernalia, and gorgeous apparatus of grief and mourning? Oh, yes! I have seen the wives of working men, when, as a minister of Christ, I have been sent for to pray with their husbands in their sick and dying bed, and, perhaps, when I have arrived too late, and have found that the living are numbered with the dead. I have seen your wives; and what were they about? Why, I have found them with the apron thrown over the countenances to hide their grief, that they might weep and mourn in secret. (Great emotion.) Now, then, I put it to yonder proud and haughty peer, I put it to yonder blind and misguided Minister of State, to tell me whether it is not high time to destroy that law, which destroys the feelings and breaks the heart, and desolates the entire face of this once happy, but now a miserable and wretched people. I must not keep you longer; but remember I say,

" 'For child and for wife,  
I will war to the knife.' "

—*Rev. J. R. Stephens, at Wigan, Nov., 1838.*

"I would not willingly disturb a foe in grief; but I would, if in my power, when his heart is softened by sorrow, induce him to retrace his steps. It has pleased Almighty God to afflict Lord John Russell. His Lordship was passionately attached to her, whom death has now snatched from him. Nature was not extinguished in *his* breast. No—no—lords and paupers are alike children of the same common parent. His wife was soothed in the prospect of death by the presence of her lord—and still the pang of SEPARATION pierced to his very soul! The pauper feels as keenly as the lord—when God inflicts the SEPARATING pang! But, if I dare venture into the grief-chamber of Lord John, I would ask—IS NOT DEATH SOON ENOUGH? His throbbing heart—his streaming eyes—his palsied tongue—would, in the soundless voice of anguish, utter—'too soon, too soon!' Remember, now—thou noble and not un-

pitied mourner—that the paupers whom, by force, thou hast *separated* in life—feel as much as when a lady dies! By the last look—the last sigh—the last grasp thy lady gave thee—I entreat thee—relent—and set the prisoners of poverty free! Those who have been already slain by grief, thou canst not restore—their blood still cries for vengeance! There was a cause—thy trouble was not chance! Perhaps to make *thee* feel for others. ‘Thy sun went down while it was yet day.’ Perhaps to open thy eyes upon the truth of nature’s volume—‘The desire of thine eyes was removed at a stroke.’ Lady Russell will not have died in vain, if her sorrowing lord now listens to the cries of suffering humanity!—now sets the prisoners free. Oh! that his darling, innocent, orphan infant, may powerfully plead before his Lordship for the infants—the *banished* infants—the *separated* infants—the *sorrowing* infants—the *man-orphaned* infants of the poor!”—*Oastler’s Letter to the Editors of the “Northern Star,” dated from Rhyl, near St. Asaph, Nov. 2, 1838.*

MORE PATRIOTS!—“Mr. Greene presented a petition from the Poor-Law Guardians of Lancaster, praying the House not to reduce the number of the Assistant Poor-Law Commissioners.”—*House of Commons, May 18, 1841.*

WHAT A NICE LAW!—“In the Kilrush Poor-Law Union, the valuation books have been sent in, from which it appeared that the rate-payers put in no fewer than 4,500 objections to the valuation of their property.”—*Metropolitan Conservative Journal, April 3, 1841.*

HIGH SHERIFF.—“The Poor-Law Commissioners have expressed an opinion, that a person, while holding the office of High Sheriff of the county, is disqualified to act as an *ex-officio* Guardian within that county. To be an *ex-officio* Guardian under the 38th sec. of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, the Justice must be acting for the county, which the statute, 1 Mary, sec. 2, c. 8, declares that the sheriff of the county is incompetent to do.”—*Worcester Herald, April 21, 1838.*

THE COLLECTION OF RATES.—“By the New Poor-Law Act, if the deputy overseer should neglect to summon house-keepers in arrear of their poor-rates, and, in consequence, the rate should remain uncollected, he is chargeable for the amount of such rates, the payment of which the auditor of the Union may en-

force against him.”—*Hereford Journal, Sept., 1838.*

HOW POPULAR IT IS!—“No fewer than eight townships, or parishes, in the Thirsk Union, and ten ditto in the North-allerton Union, have this year declined, or neglected, to return any Guardians of the poor.”—*Sheffield Iris, April 6, 1841.*

VALUE OF USURY TO THE POOR.—“At the Dublin Sessions last week it was proved, that a man, named Campbell, had pawned a coat and handkerchief, every Monday, for the last seventeen years. The interest paid on both, during that period, was just £25 15s. 8d.”—*Champion, Oct. 27, 1839.*

THE CATHOLICS AND THE ACT.—“Mr. Langdale presented a petition from between 9,000 and 10,000 Catholics of Manchester and Salford, praying that Catholics in workhouses might be allowed to visit their places of worship on Sundays and holidays; also, a petition from the Catholics in the metropolis to the same effect.”—March 26, 1841.

POOR-RATES ON WORKHOUSES.—“At Hereford Sessions, in an appeal against a rate, it was decided, that the new Union workhouse erected in that city, under the authority of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, was not liable to be assessed to the poor-rates. This, we understand, is the first time that the point has been directly decided under the new law.”—*Champion, August 12, 1838.*

THE SHOCKING SUICIDE OF SIR JAMES GRAHAM.—“He was about to comment on a measure which appeared to him to afford a most *satisfactory* test of the legislative skill of the Government, and of their power to carry out important measures. He alluded to the question of the Poor-Law. He (Sir J. Graham) had been a party to the introduction of that measure, which he regarded as one of primary importance.”—*Sir James Graham, House of Commons, May 28, 1841, (Want of Confidence Debate.)*

“At the Strand Petty Sessions, on Monday, the proprietors of Covent-garden theatre appealed against the poor-rate assessment, which had been fixed at £2,700 per annum. After a lengthened inquiry, the Bench decided that the rate should be reduced to £2,000. That part of Drury-lane theatre which had been rated to the parish of St. Paul’s at £360, was reduced to £300.”—*Champion, Nov. 10, 1839.*



KENSINGTON UNION. — FORMAL CONSENT OF THE GUARDIANS TO THE SEPARATION OF THE PARISH OF CHELSEA THEREFROM.

"At the weekly meeting of the Board of Guardians of the Kensington Union, held on Thursday last, Sir J. S. Lillie in the chair, after the transaction of some ordinary business,

"Mr. Cornell, the clerk, laid before the Board the following form of consent necessary for the separation of Chelsea from the Union, which he had received from the Poor-Law Commissioners, and to which the Guardians (the valuation of the property belonging to the Union having been made, and the balance due from Chelsea ascertained) had been specially summoned to affix their signatures.

"The Guardians then present (a full Board) signed the form; the remainder of the signatures making the required number having since been obtained, on Tuesday last the document was despatched to their 'Majesties' at Somerset-house, who will forthwith issue an 'order' for the election of the long sought for, and at last granted, Board of Guardians in and for the parish of Chelsea only, which, it is expected, will take place the first week in July next.

"KENSINGTON UNION.

"Whereas the Poor-Law Commissioners, by an order under their hands and seal, bearing date the 12th day of January, 1837, did order and declare, that the parishes of St. Mary Abbott, Kensington, St. Luke, Chelsea, Fulham, Hammersmith, and Paddington, in the county of Middlesex, should, on the 11th day of February then next, be united for the administration of the laws for the relief of the poor by the name of the 'Kensington Union.'

"And whereas, by an Act passed in the 4th year of the reign of her Majesty Queen Victoria, entitled, 'An Act for the administration of the Poor-Laws in the parish of St. Luke, Chelsea, in the county of Middlesex, and relating to the highways in the said parish,' it is enacted, that it shall be lawful for the Poor-Law Commissioners, and they are thereby required, by order, under their hands and seal, to direct that the administration of the laws for the relief of the poor in the said parish shall be in a Board of Guardians to be elected and constituted according to the provisions of certain Acts for the better administration of the poor-laws.

"And whereas it is considered desir-

able, that a majority of not less than two-thirds of the Guardians of the poor of the said Union should, in furtherance of the said recited provision of the said Act, passed in the fourth year of the reign of her present Majesty, testify their concurrence to the separation of the said parish of St. Luke, Chelsea, from the said Union.

"Now, therefore, we, being a majority of two-thirds of the Guardians of the poor of the Kensington Union, do hereby concur in the separation of the said parish of St. Luke, Chelsea, from the said Union, upon the following terms, viz.—That, in consideration of the furniture, fixtures, and effects to be left at Chelsea workhouse, as the property of that parish, which furniture, fixtures, and effects are particularized in an inventory taken by Mr. Livermore, on the 19th, 20th, and 21st of May last, and in consideration of certain new buildings erected at the said house at the expense of the Kensington Union, and particularized in a survey and valuation made by Mr. Handford, of the parish of Chelsea, in May last, the said parish of Chelsea do pay to the Board of Guardians of the Kensington Union, the sum of £248 15s. 2d., and do pay such further sum as the stock of provisions and clothing, remaining in store at the said workhouse on the 22d day of July next, may amount to; the valuation of the same to be made upon the contract prices at which the same have been or may be supplied; the said 22d day of July being the day on which the separation of Chelsea parish from the Kensington Union is to take place, and on which day all the in-door poor, who may then happen to be chargeable to Chelsea, are to be removed from the other workhouses of the Union to the workhouse at Chelsea; and the in-door poor belonging to the other parishes of the Union inhabiting Chelsea workhouse are to be removed therefrom.

"And it is further agreed and understood, that the parish of Chelsea, on account of the consideration before specified, renounces all claim, right, and title to any share or portion of the furniture, fixtures, provisions, or effects which now are, or which may be, in the workhouses at Kensington, Fulham, and Hammersmith, on the said 22d of July next; and also renounces all claim to any compensation or satisfaction for or on account of any new buildings which have been erected at the said workhouses at Kensington,

Fulham, and Hammersmith, since the formation of the Kensington Union.'

"Thus will the Poor-Law Commissioners, after nearly four years of obstinate resistance to the just demands of Chelsea for a return to local government, have been completely beaten; and it only remains for the country to do its duty by equally beating the heartless Poor-Law Ministers, by returning, at the approaching election, men opposed to that most savage, inhuman, pauper-punishing law—the New Poor-Law; when we may expect, not only great modifications in that enactment, but a speedy annihilation of the intolerable Commission itself."—*Times*, June 17, 1841.

THE HISTORY OF THOUSANDS.—"A labourer near Eton, after applying in vain for relief to the Board of that notorious Union, and having no means for satisfying the famine of his wife and children, and being unable to bear the horrors of his own wretched dwelling, arose and left his desolate home, and laid himself to sleep in a field, where, the next morning, he was found dead from starvation and cold. Suppose this same man had proceeded to the highway, resolved to feed his children by the fruits of robbery rather than see them die of hunger, is there any one so hard-hearted as to find no excuse for a man that had formed such a determination?"—*Rev. G. S. Cookesley's Letter to the Eton Guardians*, Jan., 1841.

NEWSPAPER REPORTING. — "The Poor-Law Guardians of the North and South Dublin Unions, having resolved to admit newspaper reporters to their meetings, received an intimation from Mr. Stanley, the Secretary to the Commissioners, that by so doing they would violate the Poor-Law Act."—*Sheffield Iris*, Dec. 22, 1840.

MR. OASTLER'S ELOQUENCE.—"In the glorious accomplishment of witching with noble, Godlike eloquence an assembly of his countrymen, Richard Oastler has no equal, certainly no superior. He *indeed* plays the orator well, if what appears in him to be innate, can be so designated. As the Macgregor felt himself a potentate when his foot was on his native heather, so is Richard Oastler always 'himself' when he electrifies from the hustings with 'sparkles dire' against tyranny and oppression, the Factory and the Bastile. For working up into enthusiasm a huge mass of people—eager,

listening people—for moving their sympathies to and fro at will, and making them all feel as *one man*—united, ready to do and die for him—indignant of the wrong, and glorious for the right—Richard Oastler is pre-eminently, over all other public speakers, distinguished. Truly, when his tongue burns in a crowd, phosphorent with the flashing flame of his generous themes and sentiments, let that crowd beware; for, as Byron says—

'Where men have souls or bodies,'

he 'must answer.' " — *G. R. Wythen Baxter*.

#### EXTRAORDINARY AFFAIR AT BROMPTON.

"On Tuesday, at the Kensington Board of Guardians, at which Sir Edmund Head, the Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, presided, the following extraordinary case came before them:—Thomas Johnson, a man between 50 and 60 years of age, a pensioner in the First Regiment of Foot Guards, and respectably attired, was brought up in the custody of the superintendent of the Worcester police force, on a warrant issued at the instance of the parish officers of Kensington Union, charging him with deserting his wife and ten children.

"From the statement made by the officer, it appeared, that the defendant had undergone an examination before the magistrates at Worcester, where he was apprehended, who, on understanding that the defendant would compromise the affair with the Relieving Officers of the Union, as to the amount claimed for the maintenance of his wife and family, adjourned the case for the opinion of the parish authorities of Kensington.

"By the direction of the Board the wife was called in and examined, to the following effect:—She said her name was Sarah Johnson, and at the time of the defendant's deserting her and her family, two years ago last September, she lived at No. 2, Queen's-gardens, Knightsbridge, in the parish of Kensington, ever since which she and her family had been maintained at the expense of the Union. Three years previous to her being deserted, she was in the habit of acting as charwoman; and the defendant, during that time, was in the habit of attending there also to assist about the house. Subsequently he was taken into the house to attend Capt. —, who dislocated his shoulder by being thrown from a horse in



Hyde-park. The family at that period consisted of Capt. — and his two daughters; one about 35 years of age, and the other 32 years of age, both tall fine-looking women, and of superior education. She had no idea of any intimacy existing between them and the defendant until the 28th of June, 1838, when a hint was given her by the servant girl, that the defendant and Miss — were remarkably familiar. A day or two afterwards, she spoke to Miss — about it, and threatened to tell her father, when both Miss — and the defendant contradicted her statement, and persuaded her to do the washing at home, instead of doing it at Capt. —'s house. She would not, but some days after Miss — came to her, and said, 'If she went home to wash, she would settle an annuity of £40 upon her for life;' which she agreed to. Before, however, leaving, she had an interview with the youngest daughter, Miss —, to whom she made known her suspicion. Her answer was, 'Pray don't tell my father, he is now in a weak state of health; if you do, it will certainly cause his death. You need not fear, there is nothing bad between us. She and her sister were only fond of him because he was fond of them, and he was kind to their father.' In the month of September following, she received private information that on a certain morning the defendant and Miss — were going to elope together from the Captain's house, and, accordingly, she waited about the spot accompanied by a friend. They remained near the house all night, till about four o'clock in the morning, when a coach drove up to the door, and a few minutes afterwards, the defendant came out of the house with a portmanteau in his hand. She instantly laid hold of him, and he dropped the portmanteau. Immediately after, Miss — rushed out and jumped into the coach, but the moment she reached the top step, her friend seized hold of her dress and pulled her back, and she fell into the kennel. A violent scuffle ensued. She (witness) was pushed down, and at length the defendant picked up Miss — and got into the coach, which instantly drove off at a rapid rate before an alarm could be raised. From that time she had never seen the defendant until apprehended by the superintendent of the police at Evesham, near Worcester. It was not the first time he had deserted her. A year or two before this occurrence he had eloped with a

servant girl, when, after an absence of a year, he returned to her. She had borne him ten children.

"Other evidence was adduced, from which it appeared, that the defendant has been living with Miss — ever since. She had one child, and was in an advanced state of pregnancy. She was possessed of property, which they had been living upon.

"The Board, after some discussion, came to an opinion, that the case was of such a description as precluded them from allowing the matter to be compromised, and that they would not be doing the duty which they owed to the public if they did not make an example.

"The defendant was immediately taken back to Worcester, and on the following day was committed as a vagabond to the House of Correction for one calendar month, and to be kept at hard labour."—*Times*, May 21, 1841.

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WHAT A PERFECT ENACTMENT!—"Mr. Sidebottom has called the attention of the Worcester magistrates to an enactment in the Poor-Law, whereby, in cases of pauper removals, a *personal* service of the order is insisted on. Mr. Crisp had just presented an account of £6 for expenses incurred on account of a pauper belonging to the parish of Richmond, *extra* London; and out of that sum, £3 12s. 9d. (and a very moderate sum, he confessed) was charged for the journey to that parish and back. Now, why could not this be sent by post, at the trifling cost of a penny? Surely (Mr. Sidebottom observed) this required some amendment."—*Hereford Journal*, Nov. 25, 1840.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN POVERTY AND INDIGENCE. — "The terms poverty and indigence, usually employed as synonymous, do not express the same idea, nor represent the same situation. Poverty is relative, indigence is absolute; the poor man has not enough, the indigent has nothing; the former wants assistance, the latter must have succour, or perish. In modern times a new word has been coined which has not a little increased the confusion of ideas prevailing on this subject; pauperism is employed as a common name both for indigence and poverty, and has, consequently, led to the suggestion of common remedies for the very different evils of both; the pernicious consequences may be traced in our public discussions, in our varied institu-

tions, and even in our legislation. Finally, mendicity has been added to the chaos to express the result of indigence, a result by no means necessary, and the most pernicious test that could possibly be applied.”—*Dr. Taylor in “Bentley’s Miscellany.”*

WANGFORD UNION.—“At the Bungalow petty-sessions, on Thursday week, a young man, named William Charlish, was charged with robbing the Wangford Union of a suit of clothes, and also with going out of the poor-house without leave. The charge having been made by the workhouse master, the prisoner said, that being out of work, and almost starving, he applied for relief a month back, and received an order for the workhouse, where his own clothes were taken away from him, and the Union clothes given to him. Instead of being put into the house, he and two others were taken into the criminal gaol, and put into a filthy cell, in which were two men ill with the itch. He thought that he had no right to be used in that infamous manner, and seeing a means of escape, he got out, but not before he caught the disorder. On the next morning, he sent his father with the Union clothes to the workhouse, but the master refused to take them or give up his own. The magistrate asked the workhouse-keeper if this statement were true, and he answered that it was. He did not think he had done wrong by putting a pauper into gaol with people who had the itch. The Bench, after expressing their disgust at the way in which the defendant had been treated, immediately dismissed the complaint.” — *Suffolk Chronicle*, Oct., 1839.

“In 1833, the late Dr. Ravenhill, of Tooting, died, and bequeathed the sum of £50 to the parish of Tooting Graveney, and directed that the interest, amounting to about 30s. per annum, should be given to the aged people in the poor-house of that parish, at such times, and in such manner, as the Overseers of the parish, for the time being, might think fit. The sum was distributed, annually, according to the intentions of the donor, up to the year 1838. But when the poor of Tooting were sent to the Clapham and Wandsworth Union-house, and the money was tendered there, the Guardians refused to receive it, alleging as a reason, that it was contrary to the orders of the Poor-Law Commissioners. Is it, then, come to this, that the three kings of Somerset-house are to have the power of

preventing parties from benefiting by a bequest to which they are entitled, merely because such parties are paupers? Of course, I am aware that the Poor-Law Commissioners will plead, first, that there are no aged poor in the poor-house of Tooting, for the paupers are in a Union poor-house out of the parish; and, secondly, that as the bequest gives a discretionary power to the Overseers for the time being to pay the money at such times, and in such manner, as the Overseers may think fit, if the Overseer does not think fit to pay it at any time, or in any manner, there is no law to compel him. But such special pleading would be an insult to the sense of any man not a Poor-Law Commissioner. The money was to be given to certain persons, not because they lived in a certain house, but because they belonged to a certain parish; and, as far as the intention of the donor is concerned, it would be a matter of perfect indifference, whether the paupers were located at Tooting or at any other place. Then, as regards the discretionary power given to the Overseer, it is equally evident that his discretion was limited to the times when, and the parties to whom the money was to be given; nor could the donor have intended that the money should remain undisturbed in the hands of the Overseer. I ask, then, with what view but to deprive the poor of those comforts which the kind-hearted donor intended, have the Poor-Law Commissioners thus turned aside the current of charity? And whether it was not to meet this and similar cases that a clause has been introduced in the falsely called Poor-Law Amendment-Act, by which the Poor-Law Commissioners and their puppets, the Guardians, are to have the power of putting their clutches on all moneys given for the relief the poor.” — *Times*, April 2, 1841.

A WHIG’S OPINION OF MR. OASTLER.—“From our acquaintance with him, we can assure our readers there are few men like Mr. Oastler. His violence in politics cannot be tolerated in any way; but his kindness to the poor, with whom he has much to do, stamps him a philanthropist of no mean order. Both his character and conduct have been much belied, although much that has been said may be true; yet all who have had the pleasure of his acquaintance will agree with us, that there are few men with minds so well stored, or hearts so open. Take him away from politics,



Mr. O. is the finished scholar, the perfect gentleman; attack him in his stronghold, and few can withstand the torrent of argument he will bring against them. His enmity to the New Poor-Law continues as strong as ever, and will do so, we conceive, till the grave shall close over him—furthermore, even after that, if any great agitation was got up against that measure, we question whether Mr. Oastler would not again appear to lead on his party, so deadly an animosity does he bear to it.”—*Nottingham Mercury*, Oct., 1839.

#### TREATMENT OF THE PAUPER-DEAD.

“*To the Editor of the ‘Times.’*”

“Sir,—By appointment I attended at my church this afternoon to officiate at the funeral of two ‘Union paupers.’ At the time appointed a small hearse, drawn by a pony, was brought to the church gates, attended by two undertakers’ men and two lads. A coffin, containing the body of a child, was first taken out, which one of the lads carried under his arm into the church, and placed, apparently with much difficulty, across two pews. The coffin containing the remains of the adult, was next brought into the church, by one lad and two men, and certainly no accident, much to my astonishment, occurred. A man and a woman from the Union poor-house followed, in company with an interesting-looking girl, niece of the deceased adult. The service in the church being ended, we proceeded to the grave, one of the lads carrying the body of the child, and the other lad and two men bearing that of the adult as before. The coffin of the child was first deposited in the grave, but not without an accident, for the rope not being held sufficiently tight, or from some other cause, the coffin fell into the grave. Fortunately I was spared witnessing any other accident, for the undertaker had joined his men, and, having assisted in lowering the other coffin, walked away with his assistants before I had time to commence the beautiful service appointed to be read at the grave, leaving myself, clerk, and sexton, to finish the ceremony of ‘a pauper’s funeral.’

“The poor mourner afterwards told me how much her feelings had been wounded by the manner in which the remains of her dear relative had been committed to the grave.

“I trouble you, Sir, with the above particulars, in the hope that a line from

your powerful pen may benefit those who, like this poor creature, may be summoned to the grave of a relation, who, though poor, may have been not the less beloved.

“I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

“AN INCUMBENT.

“Nov. 19, 1840.”

“The Board of Guardians of the Preston Union have decided, after a lengthened discussion, by a majority of 17 to 13, to have only one workhouse instead of four in the Union. A discussion also took place on the fee of 6d., charged for tolling the bell at Preston church, for infant pauper children, and 9d. for adults, which was sought to be abolished, but the custom was retained by a considerable majority.”—*Champion*, Dec. 15, 1839.

“Our attention has been called to a resolution of the Guardians of Morpeth (the pocket borough of the ‘blood of all the Howards’) not to allow money for funerals of paupers dying within the Union..... Nothing is wanted to consummate the measure, but to add a clause, that all persons dying in workhouses shall be dissected publicly; and in furtherance of this, we observe in the *Times*, that the Bishop of Peterborough had consented to license a pauper burying-ground within the workhouse.”—*Conservative Journal*, March 11, 1837.

“It is stated to me as a fact, that the putrid remains of dead paupers have been sold for manure.”—*Oastler’s “Fleet Papers,”* No. 7.

REFUSAL TO BURY A PAUPER. — “The inhuman administrators of the Poor-Law, not content with denying the means of subsistence to the living, have, in a recent instance, even refused the last rite of sepulture to the dead. An application was made in the Bail Court, on Friday, to Mr. Justice Patteson for a *mandamus*, to compel the parish officers of St. George’s, Hanover-square, to bury the body of a female pauper, named Kershaw, who had died in St. George’s hospital. It was urged, that unless the Court granted the *mandamus*, the body must remain above-ground in a state of decomposition. The parish authorities, by their counsel, hoped the Court would merely grant a rule *nisi*, that they might have an opportunity of stating their reasons for not interring the body. Mr. Justice Patteson said, that the body must

be buried by the governors of the hospital, on the condition, that if the rule should be made absolute, the parish should reimburse the hospital. The wretched motive of the parish is obvious. Under Mr. Warburton's Anatomy Bill, the bodies of paupers who die in an hospital became the property of the hospital for anatomical purposes, the expense of burial being chargeable to the hospital. In this case, however, St. George's hospital being supported by voluntary contributions, the governors might refuse to admit the pauper, so that the parish would have incurred the cost of medical treatment, in addition to the expense of interment." — *Champion*, January 26, 1840.

#### ABUSE OF THE PAUPER-DEAD.

[Copies of the subscribed memorial were transmitted me by Mr. Oastler some months back, for to get signatures attached to them, but, somehow or other, I was not *successful*. Such petitions, however, ought to be numerously signed, and sent up to both Houses. Let them be so.—G. R. W. B.]

"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.  
"The humble Petition of the undersigned Inhabitants of ———

"Showeth,—That your Petitioners feel deep concern that the remains of the destitute poor, who, in God's providence, outlive their friends, should be sent to Schools of Anatomy for dissection.

"That your petitioners are informed, that the Anatomy Act provides for the decent interment of dissected bodies; but that the said Act is contravened, and human remains are promiscuously allowed to decompose in a mass:—and, in some instances, persons connected with Schools of Anatomy are dealers in human bones for sale.

"Your petitioners therefore humbly pray,

"That your Honourable House will appoint a Committee to inquire whether the Anatomy Act has been used to serve political or mercenary interests.

"That whether the Government Inspector has aided such interests.

"That whether paupers' remains have been wilfully wasted in anatomical schools;—and that your Honourable House will call for all further evidence which may be required.

"And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray."

AN AFFECTING INCIDENT. — CHICHESTER. — "A stone was erected this week in Mundham churchyard, near this city, by voluntary subscription, with the following inscription:—'In memory of Hannah, wife of Charles Barnett, who died February 28, 1841, aged 28 years, in the West Hampnett Union workhouse. Also of Ann, their daughter, who died the next day in the same place, aged three years. Charles Barnett was a farm labourer in this parish, and being out of employ, and unable to get any work, was obliged to go to the above Union with a sick wife and two children, where they were separated from one another; the parish officers having no power to grant out-door relief, he was obliged to go there, or starve, beg, or steal. He left the Union with an only daughter, seven years of age, and buried his wife and infant daughter in this grave. 'The bread of the needy is his life: he that defraudeth him thereof is a man of blood.' Ecclus. xxxiv. v. 21.'"—*From a Correspondent of the "Times,"* May 28, 1841.

BEGGING FOR GUARDIANS.—"Yesterday, a numerous meeting of the rate-payers of the extensive parish of St. Mary Abbots, Kensington, was held pursuant to public notice in the vestry-room of the Old Church, the Venerable Archdeacon Pott (vicar) in the chair, 'for the purpose of receiving and considering the report of a committee in reference to the properties belonging to the national school of that parish;' after which, the Churchwardens submitted to the vestry a copy of an order of the Poor-Law Commissioners, dated the 26th of April last, directing the election of four more Guardians of the poor for that parish, two Guardians only having been elected under the Commissioners' order of the 4th of March last, instead of six, in order that the parishioners might consider what steps were necessary to be taken in respect to the nomination of proper persons to be such Guardians. An animated discussion then ensued as to the alleged irregularities practised at the late election, which were stated to have received the sanction of the Poor-Law Commissioners, although the nomination was decidedly illegal; the effect of which had been, that Kensington had been, for the last six weeks, virtually unrepresented at the Board of Guardians, although the



second parish in the Union. After the expression, in strong language, of disapprobation at the conduct of the Commissioners in maintaining the first election, the office of Guardian was offered to all the leading inhabitants present, the whole of whom declined accepting it; and after the offer had gone the round of the vestry, the meeting adjourned without any nomination taking place."—*Times*, May 11, 1841.

MURDER OF A CHILD BY ITS OWN FATHER. — "On Thursday last, John Newitt, a well-conducted labouring man, lately under porter at Addenbroke's Hospital, Cambridge, and who lived with his wife and children in the Falcon-yard, Pettycurry, in that town, almost severed from its body the head of his own son, an infant seven weeks old, and then gave himself up to the police, stating, that he was led to commit the horrid deed through dread of the Union workhouse. The unhappy man had, on the morning of the same day, attempted his own life by taking a quantity of laudanum. When examined before the mayor, the prisoner said he had murdered the child whilst his wife had gone out for half-a-pint of porter. He had been disappointed in work, and had murdered the child because he thought his wife could not get on with it, as he had no employment; it had no sins to answer for, therefore he thought it best to put it away, and he hoped to be forgiven and go to Heaven after it. The magistrates committed the prisoner to take his trial on a charge of murder at the next assizes."—*Times*, May 10, 1841.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

"Sir,—As you have undertaken the vindication of the cause of the victims of the New Poor-Law on this side of the Channel, I take the liberty of inclosing to you an extract from the *Saunders's News Letter* (Dublin newspaper) of the 28th inst., from which you will see that the Liberals—*lucus a non lucendo*—of Ireland are well qualified to address Lord John Russell and Co. in the language of Shylock—'The villainy that you teach us we will practise, and it will go hard but we will better the instruction.'

"The freeholders of England will do well to recollect, on the hustings, that immediately after the Guardians of the South Dublin Union *had voted a sideboard to their clerk*, under the proper and indignant protest of Captain Nowlan, Mr. Terence Dolan, Liberal, Corn-Exchange

agitator, repealer, and vociferator of 'justice for Ireland,' gave notice of a motion for discharging the paupers from the miserable refuge of the workhouse at the rate of 100 per week—that is to say, that when, in order to wound their feelings to the quick, this worthy agent of the Somerset-house despotism has compelled them to accept the workhouse test, he would, by 100 at a time, turn them loose on the streets, to be dealt with by famine in such a manner as will effectually relieve the rate-payers.

"It matters not whether the resolution be carried or rejected. It is enough that a notice so infamous as this could have been given—especially after the passing of the sideboard grant to the clerk. Let Englishmen be on their guard—the same sort of economy will soon be practised on them if the Poor-Law Administration remain in office.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"your obedient servant,

"May 31.

"ERIGENA.

—June 2, 1841."

LORD TEIGNMOUTH THE PEELITE.  
—"Before animadverting upon any of the ministerial speeches delivered in the House of Commons on Friday night, we think it right to express, in the strongest terms we can employ, our opinion of one passage in the speech of a Conservative member. Lord Teignmouth is reported to have said, 'that for some of the measures of the Government he admitted that the greatest praise was due to them, and the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) *deserved immortal honour*—the measures for the support of the Established Church, *the alteration of the Poor-Law*, and, above all, *the noble stand* he made during the last session *for the privileges of that House*. *In those respects, the noble Lord deserved the highest praise.*' We trust we are not intolerant of other men's judgments; we have no desire to make a personal attack upon Lord Teignmouth because he thinks differently from ourselves; but we cannot regard the tone and manner of this passage, in which he has so gratuitously chosen to express his admiration of the New Poor-Law, and the inflexibility of his attachment to privilege, as anything less than a defiance of those who differ from him upon these two important questions. After such an announcement, discovering such utter contrariety of feeling and irreconcilable hostility to the views entertained by the great body of people

upon two subjects in which their rights and liberties are essentially involved, we should despise any man who, professing himself to be for liberty against privilege, or for the poor against the New Poor-Law, could yet tender his vote for Lord Teignmouth at any future parliamentary election—we should despise him.”—*Times*, May 31, 1841.

PETITIONING.—“Mr. B. Wilbraham gave notice, that shortly after the Easter holidays, he should present a petition from Manchester, against the Poor-Law Continuance-Bill, which had already been signed by upwards of 46,000 individuals.”—*House of Commons*, April 2, 1841.

WORKHOUSE DOINGS.—“A girl applied for an order to be admitted into the West London workhouse, she being pregnant and utterly destitute. She stated, that she was cook in the workhouse, but was turned out to find a place of service. Nobody, however, would take her, she being pregnant by the pauper who cuts up the food for the rest of the paupers. Mr. Miller, the Relieving Officer, being present, said he had hoped she could have sustained herself till the Board met again, as he did not like to re-admit a person who had so misbehaved upon his own authority. The girl, in answer to a question from the alderman, said, the cutter-up was permitted to do business in her kitchen. Mr. Miller said, he appeared to be a very bad fellow; another girl in the House was pregnant by him. Mr. Alderman Humphrey said it was very evident the house was badly managed. If the poor girl was destitute, she ought to be taken into the House. It was idle to suppose she could get into service. Mr. Miller promised to relieve her.”—*Champion*, Nov. 10, 1839.

#### THE GILBERT UNIONS.

“It may have been thought by some, and especially by those who recollect the compliments paid to the Gilbert Unions at the time when the change in the Poor-Laws was under discussion, that the difference between their system and that of Somerset-house was, after all, but trifling, and that in persecuting them, the Commissioners were only adding another to the many examples already furnished by history of the fallacy of the classical maxim, ‘*Sævis inter se convenit ursis*.’ Such thoughts, however, do great injustice to both parties concerned;—to the Gilbert Unions, which work indifferently well, and are free, upon the whole, from the worst vices of the

Somerset-house system;—to the Poor-Law Commissioners, who have been driven to attack the Gilbert Unions in pure self-defence. The practice of the former supplies a convincing refutation of the principles of the latter, in every point in which they differ. The Gilbert Unions (in the language of the Commissioners themselves), ‘set a bad example to the Poor-Law Unions,’ the effect of which is materially heightened by the *primâ facie* resemblance between the two. It is most natural that the Commissioners should wish to get rid of an awkward commentary upon their administration; of which they candidly admit, that, so long as it exists, they can never hope to make their own system palatable or popular!

“Let us trace out a little in detail the principal points of resemblance and difference between these systems:—Under Gilbert’s Act, as well as under the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, relief is administered, not by every parish separately, but by a combination of parishes, represented by Guardians. Under the one Act this combination is voluntary; under the other compulsory. Under Gilbert’s Act, a modified superintending power is lodged in a visitor, elected by the parishes themselves, resident in the neighbourhood, acquainted with the characters of the Guardians, and the local circumstances of the poor, and having frequent opportunities of inspecting for himself the details of the system. Under the Poor-Law Amendment-Act, a despotic superintending power is placed in the hands of three gentlemen appointed by the Government, resident in London, ignorant and regardless of all local circumstances, and seeing nothing themselves of the working of their own regulations.

“In the Gilbert Unions the Guardians, who are usually persons of substance and consideration, are bound to attend the meetings of the Board, and do attend punctually, under a pecuniary penalty; so that all the parishes are *bonâ fide* represented. In the Poor-Law Unions there is nothing to compel the attendance of Guardians; a great proportion of them do not attend, and the business of the Union is constantly transacted by an insignificant jobbing coterie.

“In the Gilbert Unions every Guardian discharges the duty of Relieving Officer, so that every parish has its own Relieving Officer, resident on the spot, and personally acquainted with the history and circumstances of every family



and every individual. In the Poor-Law Unions there is only one Relieving Officer for all the combined parishes (except in the most populous town Unions, where there are sometimes two or three), who has neither the time nor the knowledge of persons or places, which would be necessary for the effectual discharge of the duties implied in his name. Captain Pechell well observed at Worthing, that, 'between the Relieving Officer's visits, which, like those of angels, are very generally far between, there are no means provided for relieving urgent cases of distress. Everybody with a feeling heart must admit that the person who is to relieve ought to be resident in the parish, and that the poor ought not to be abandoned to the casualty of catching relief from the Relieving Officer in his flying progress through a Union.'

"With respect to the actual administration of relief in the workhouses and out of them, the contrast is still more striking. In the Gilbert Unions (to quote again the words of Captain Pechell), 'the Guardians have power to relieve the distresses and most urgent wants of the poor, without driving them into a workhouse, and blighting all their future hopes and prospects of independence, and they can give their poor a sufficiency of proper diet.' This power they not only possess, but use. They make a difference between the cases of applicants, preferring virtue and industry over vice and intemperance. 'If a decayed tradesman, or industrious labourer, overtaken by misfortune, comes for assistance,' they think him 'entitled to better treatment and greater favour than the drunkard, or those who have been ruined by a vicious career.' They do not force such persons to enter the workhouse or confiscate their small remaining properties as a preliminary condition of relief. In the East Preston (Gilbert) Union, of which Worthing is a member, the married people are not separated from each other, or from their families; the workhouse diet consists of good meat, tea, and beer; the poor having, upon their own solicitation, been indulged with a trial of the dietary of a neighbouring Poor-Law Union (West Hampnett), unanimously petitioned the Board to return to their own more liberal system; the Board immediately complied with this request. It cannot be necessary to point out the utter contrariety between such modes of administering relief and those of the Poor-Law Com-

missioners. The difference is sufficiently illustrated by an every-day case, mentioned at the Worthing meeting by a gentleman named Read:—"He knew a case in which, through an accident which befel him, a man went into the Steyning Union workhouse, and the moment he got there he was separated from his wife and children; and it was not till after the most earnest and pressing solicitations that the wife was allowed to see her sick husband once all the while he was confined there.'

"Then, as to the question of comparative expense. The Gilbert Unions are at present economically managed, and the rate-payers are completely satisfied, and wish for no reduction in the amount of relief afforded. In that of Long Preston the entire expense of the working machinery, including the Governor and Matron of the workhouse, and all the other paid officers, does not exceed £85 a-year. This sum would be raised at once to £500 a-year, if the Poor-Law Amendment-Act were introduced. And, in addition to this, 'the rates,' said Mr. Read, 'would be doubled, to build new workhouses to lock up the poor.'

"We have no reason to suppose that the case of the Long Preston Union is in any degree peculiar. No doubt there have been, and will be, abuses in some of the Gilbert incorporations, as there will under every system, but we have never heard of any which can be compared for a moment to the gross and flagrant oppressions so frequently practised under the sway of the Poor-Law Commissioners. Without affecting to prefer the principle of combination, in any of its forms, to that of parochial government, we believe it to be generally true, as stated by Capt. Pechell, that 'all the exertions and inquiries of the Assistant-Commissioners have tended to prove that the system of management in the Gilbert Unions gives satisfaction to those who receive and those who provide the charity.' This, we are thoroughly persuaded, is the only reason why the Commissioners are bent upon substituting for it a system which both these parties equally hold in abhorrence."

—*Times*.

#### FATAL AFFRAY IN A WORKHOUSE.—

"The Mile-end Workhouse is at present occupied by old men, and some of them were on Wednesday in the oakum-shed in the yard, at their accustomed employ. The deceased, William Spence, who was in his 78th year, and an old waterman, was so engaged, when some words arose

between him and a man named Hancock, and the deceased, who is represented to have been an extremely quarrelsome man, challenged the other to fight, which he accepted, and a pulling or tugging each other about took place for some minutes. At length both the men fell, and in falling the deceased's head came in contact with a block or stool. The parties got up again, but the deceased appeared disposed to continue the fight, but after a little further struggling, one of the other men, named Isaacs, interfered and parted the combatants. Water was then procured, and the deceased's head was washed, and every pains taken to conceal the occurrence from the master and mistress. The deceased came in to his dinner, which he ate heartily, and afterwards his tea, when Mrs. Yeldham, the mistress, observed that he looked unwell, and he said it was only a pain in his head, which he had had some days. She ordered him to go to bed, which, after some hesitation, he essayed to do, but, finding that he grew worse, she ordered the men to lead him to the sick ward. The man was then put to bed, and the surgeon immediately sent for, who pronounced him to be in a very dangerous condition. The deceased did not say one word of the matter up to his death, which occurred on Thursday morning at seven o'clock. An inquiry was, however, instituted in consequence of some appearances on the deceased's head, when the whole truth came out, and Thomas Hancock, who is himself aged 67, and almost a cripple, freely acknowledged the whole part he had in the matter."—*Times*, March 20, 1841.

MR. BAINES'S BOTHER.—"Mr. Baines said, had as much pains been taken to rouse the people against power-looms, as had been taken to rouse them against the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill, there would not have been one left in the country. (Cheers)."—*House of Commons*, July 20, 1839.

WAS THE OLD POOR-LAW SO VERY BAD?—"It carried us through the most perilous and burdensome war in which this country was ever engaged; it bore us through a period in which British Commerce and British manufactures multiplied tenfold, and British wealth one hundred-fold (we speak now of the half-century ending in 1834, when the law was said to be most encumbered with abuses); it brought the people to a moral point, which we should be sorry to think a very low one, seeing that we have, according to the

returns of criminal convictions, been declining from it ever since, that is, since the enactment of the New Law; and this, notwithstanding the unexampled zeal and success with which religious instruction, and all other instruction, has been prosecuted for seven years. Now, looking to these things, we cannot think the Old Law so very bad as it is described by the school of philanthropists who carry hearts and creeds in breeches' pockets. Looking to the state of England from 1784 to 1834, in contrast with that of Ireland, or of any other neighbouring country which had not abused Poor-Laws, we see still more reason to think with mercy of our own Old Law. It carried us through the war. Mark that! We may have such another war; will your New-Poor Law abide the test?"—*Standard*, Feb. 9, 1841.

THE PAUPER'S HISTORY.—"The pauper, who comes to a Board for relief, may show not half his misery. Nay, the more worthy the object, the greater may be the struggle with him—the effect of an honest pride—to hide somewhat of his wretchedness. Starvation may whiten his face, famine may have worn him to the bones!—the man may be a very spectacle of misery—and yet the amount of his sufferings be unknown, the full measure of his wretchedness unacknowledged. Go to his hovel; there behold the daily shifts he has made—the hourly battle with the keenest, dearest wants! Cold and hunger are his fire-side gods—and his domestic comforts, naked, famishing children. The wild beast has a warmer lair, a better shelter from the elements. The miseries of the honest struggling poor are seen in sternest truth at the poor man's hearth."—*Morning Herald*.

THE RIGHT OF THE POOR TO GO TO CHURCH.—"The reason why the Lincolnshire Unions go on well, is—the Guardians care not a fig for the minute and vexatious regulations and barkings of Cerberus in Somerset-house—the poor are not always shut up; they take air and exercise; they go to church—not (as once ordered, which order of the Poor-Law Commissioner was never obeyed) shut up to pray on a Sunday. I told them at Bourn, the church was as much the property of the poor man as the rich lord, and when he stepped on its floor, he might raise himself up and say, 'The stone I tread on is mine, by the gift of our common Maker.'"—*Extract from a Letter to the Author, from a Stamford Correspondent*, dated Oct. 21, 1840.



NEW POOR-LAW JUSTICE.—“From a recent correspondence with the Poor-Law Commissioners, it appears that there are no parochial funds whatever applicable to the payment of expenses incurred in the prosecution of persons deserting and exposing their children, even should the offence amount to murder, as lately happened, nor to advertising a description of the child, &c., or offering a reward for the apprehension of the delinquents.”—*Hereford Journal*, January 6, 1841.

THE TWO SYSTEMS.—“The so much talked of evils of the old law (partial as they were) were the gradual accumulation of 250 years, while the growth of evil under the measure of 1834, has been as rapid as it is monstrous.”—*Times*, March 24, 1841.

THE FRUITS OF THE NEW-POOR LAW.—“By Sir James Graham. Q. Do you think the present rent of cottages can be sustained of 2s. a-week, if no assistance be given from the parish in aid of rents? A. They cannot pay when they have large families. Q. The rent of cottages will fall? A. The effect will be that those with large families will have no cottages at all! In answer to various other inquiries, amounting in substance to whether or not Mr. Ford conjectured only, that many poor families might have to lie in the open air; he says, he knows of none, but anticipates that it will be the case. By Mr. Harvey. Q. Then one of the consequences arising from the New Poor-Law is, that it prevents the cottager from paying the rent which he did previously to its enactment? A. Certainly it does, or paying any rent.”—*Mr. James Ford's (of Petworth) Examination before the Poor-Law Committee*, March, 1837.

INTERESTING TO BOARDS OF GUARDIANS.—“The Guardians of the Clutton Union are, we hear, at issue with the Poor-Law Commissioners on the mode in which the new averages on the three past years' expenditure for the relief of the poor should be taken; and have unanimously declined to adopt the averages proposed to them by the Commissioners. The proposed averages do not include the cost of medical relief, officers' salaries, the cost of the furniture of the workhouse, and other charges, amounting to about £2,000 per annum. The Guardians of the Clutton Union hold, first, that it is undesirable to levy future assessments on averages which do not represent the *whole expenditure for the relief of the poor*, thereby giving to the rate-payers, and rate-receivers, and to

the public generally, an erroneous impression; and, secondly, that the matter is not discretionary with the Commissioners, and that it would be *unlawful* so to calculate and enforce the new averages, as by the Poor-Law Amendment-Act (sec. 28 and 30) it is enacted, that future averages shall be made ‘on a like inquiry and calculation’ as those on which the original averages were made.”—*Champion*, Sept. 15, 1839.

THE PERSECUTION OF MR. FEARGUS O'CONNOR.—“July 19, 1839. At the York Assizes, Mr. Feargus O'Connor was tried on a criminal information for publishing in the *Northern Star*, a paper of which he was the editor, the following libel (?) on the Guardians of the Poor-Law Union at Warminster in Wilts:—

“WARMINSTER BASTILE.—A little boy last week, for some small offence, was confined in one of the cells belonging to the above workhouse, and was literally starved to death. The poor little fellow during his confinement actually ate, in consequence of hunger, two of his fingers and the flesh from his arm.”

“Mr. O'Connor conducted his own defence. The article itself he said was ludicrous. If indeed they believed that the boy did eat his fingers, they might be quite certain the Governor was not fed on such things; whatever he gave the boys, he seemed at least to have taken good care of himself. Mr. O'C. was never at Warminster in his life; he never wrote the paragraph; he never saw or heard of it until the Attorney-General moved for the rule; the article came through the medium of another newspaper, and the greater portion of it treated of the low price of labour at Warminster. He then adverted to the motives for the prosecution (qy, *persecution?*); and asked why this information had been allowed to slumber from December to April, except that the ministry hoped for a larger bait; and that not being offered, they thought a smaller one would do?”

“A verdict of guilty was returned by the jury; and Mr. O'Connor entered into recognizances to appear at Warminster and receive judgment, which, however, (*because they were afraid!*) the parties complaining did not eventually press for.”—*Annual Register*, 1839.

#### SPECIMEN OF NEW POOR-LAW DEBATING, IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

“Earl STANHOPE presented petitions, agreed to at public meetings of agricultural labourers in different parts of the

counties of Cambridge, Huntingdon, and Suffolk, praying for the repeal of the Poor-Law Amendment-Act. The noble earl stated, that the petitions were only signed by the chairman of the meetings, the Rev. W. Maberly, but they had been unanimously agreed to.

"The Earl of RADNOR said, that the petitions could only be received as the petitions of one individual; they were all in the same words, in the same handwriting, and could only be considered as so many copies of one and the same petition. The noble earl, by presenting them as so many separate petitions, was really making a joke with the House.

"Earl STANHOPE repeated, that though they were all signed by one individual, they had been agreed to at different public meetings, and he had a right to read every one of them.

"Lord BROUGHAM hoped that would not be inflicted on the House, as such a course would be calculated to turn their lordships into ridicule. He entirely concurred with his noble friend near him (the Earl of Radnor), that these petitions were only so many copies of one petition, and that the petition only of one individual.

"Earl STANHOPE said, the difficulty would have been obviated if the meeting had been presided over by different persons. The petitions had, however, emanated from meetings composed in the aggregate of upwards of 35,000 persons.

"The Bishop of NORWICH said, he wished to state that the person by whom these petitions had been got up was a clergyman in his diocese, and he thought it exceedingly strange for him thus to excite the people against the laws of their country. He had received a letter from Mr. Maberly's curate, complaining of that gentleman's refusal to pay him his small stipend, and he (the Bishop of Norwich) thought it strange that under such circumstances Mr. Maberly should venture before the public in this way.

"Earl STANHOPE contended, that though Mr. Maberly was a clergyman, he was also a British subject, and as such entitled to the right and privilege of addressing the Legislature by petition for the redress of public grievances.

"Lord PORTMAN was sure that, after the statement of the right rev. prelate, the noble earl (Stanhope) himself would not attach much weight to the petition of Mr. Maberly.

"The Marquis of SALISBURY did not rise to justify Mr. Maberly's conduct,

but he must say, that he thought it rather unfair in the right rev. prelate to attack any petitioner who was not there to defend himself. It would only have been just if the right rev. prelate had given Mr. Maberly notice of his intention to make the statement he had.

"The Bishop of HEREFORD could not help saying, in justification of the right rev. prelate, that when a party puts his name to a dozen or more petitions against a particular law of the land, and went round to different districts exposing himself conspicuously as the defender of the rights of the poor, at the very time he had driven his own curate to a state of poverty, obliging him to partake of the benefit of that very law, he (the Bishop of Hereford) thought the right rev. prelate was bound in duty to come forward and state that such was the gentleman who came with dozens of petitions against a wholesome and salutary law. (Hear, hear.)

"The Duke of RICHMOND could not help saying, that these petitions seemed to be the result of agitation, got up, he regretted to say, by a clergyman, who went about the country for the purpose. In one of these petitions he found sentiments rather at variance with each other, for, after speaking about 'charity to all men,' it proceeded to condemn the conduct of the 'unfeeling Commissioners, and as unfeeling Secretary of State, for incarcerating the poor, and scarcely allowing them to breathe the air or see the light of heaven.' A man capable of entertaining such sentiments scarcely deserved the light of heaven. ('Hear,' and a 'laugh.')

"The Marquis of SALISBURY said, that he believed Mr. Maberly was a gentleman of excellent private character, but he certainly had not raised himself in his (the Marquis of Salisbury's) estimation by getting up these petitions. He, however, had a right to petition, and ought not to be attacked without the means of justifying himself.

"Earl STANHOPE said, that Mr. Maberly was a man whose character as a clergyman would bear the strictest investigation, and why their lordships should not feel disposed to treat with the usual respect and attention a petition emanating from such a person, or why that right which, under the British constitution, every subject in the realm was entitled to, should on this occasion be questioned, he (Earl Stanhope) could not understand. If the House did not receive these petitions, then



he would say the right of petitioning Parliament was only a farce. He, however, hoped that the people would never cease to exert themselves until they got rid of such a great and national grievance as the Poor-Law Amendment-Act; and his advice to them was to agitate, agitate, agitate, as long as such an obnoxious and detestable measure was allowed to remain. The noble earl then presented a petition from a place in the county of Suffolk, praying that the New Poor-Law Act might be forthwith repealed; also a petition from Stroud to the same effect, signed by 1,800 persons, amongst whom were several clergymen of the Established Church.

"The Bishop of NORWICH said, that as far as he knew, the clergymen of the Established Church were favourable to the present law, which he felt convinced conferred a blessing on the poor.

"Lord PORTMAN would suggest to the noble earl, convinced as he was that his only object was to assist and elevate the moral condition of the poor (hear, hear), that he would be more likely to accomplish that object by applying his mind to the subject during the recess, with a view to devise some plan by which the poor might be put into the possession of cottages at lower rent than they were now obliged to pay. (Hear, hear.) If a plan of this kind, united with one for not rating cottages below a certain sum, could be brought into operation, he was convinced the poor would be more materially served than by anything which could result from the course the noble earl was now pursuing. The New Poor-Law had brought to light many of the grievances of the old system, and in no respect had it more forcibly done so than in the rating of small cottages.

"The Duke of RICHMOND was certainly of opinion that there was no measure more imperatively called for than one respecting the rating of cottages. They were at present rated to a higher amount than the cottagers could afford to pay. The question was well worthy of the consideration of Government. He thought it would be well if some arrangement could be made by which the occupiers should only be called on to pay the rates when the rent of the cottage exceeded a certain sum, say £8 or thereabouts, that the owners should pay when the rent was under that sum, and that cottages let at £2 or £3 should not be rated at all. A great deal of the odium

which had been cast upon the present Poor-Law Act might more properly have been bestowed upon the old law. The agitation which now prevailed resembled much that which took place in the neighbouring kingdom, with the noble earl as the leader, and the clergy as his agents. He did not object to clergymen petitioning and voting for members of Parliament, but he did object to their travelling about the country and presiding at meetings attended by 35,000 persons as had been stated, for the purpose of exciting their minds against an excellent law.

"The Marquis of SALISBURY rose, he said, to vindicate the clergy of the Established Church from the slur which had been very unmeritedly thrown upon them by the noble duke.

"The Duke of RICHMOND said, his remark applied not to the body, but to a few only of its members, who had taken part in the agitation of this question.

"The Marquis of SALISBURY regretted that so much had been said on the subject of these petitions. He would cordially concur in any measure for lowering the rents of cottages, which were at present too high, and also for causing the rates, to a certain extent, to be paid by the owners, convinced as he was that it would not have the effect of raising the rents.

"Earl STANHOPE, in reply to the suggestion of the noble lord (Portman), had to say, that he had already directed his attention to this subject, and to that branch of it particularly pointed out by the noble lord, but unsuccessfully, through want of proper support. He denied, as had been stated by the noble duke, that there existed the slightest analogy between the agitation which prevailed on this subject in England, and that which took place on others in Ireland. He did not mean, for a moment, to deny that agitation prevailed, and that these petitions, as had been stated, with a view to lessen their importance, and as a reason for not giving them that consideration which was due to petitions generally, had sprung from that agitation. On the contrary, he avowed it, because he considered agitation not only proper, but highly requisite and commendable when the object to be attained by it—and therein lay the inaptitude of the noble duke's analogy—was the repeal of an odious and oppressive law, which was a disgrace to the

statute-book, and which, it was not very difficult to foresee, if allowed to continue, would inevitably produce disturbance and discontent throughout the country, and perhaps eventually lead to anarchy and convulsion. The noble earl then presented petitions, to the same effect as those already named, from the inhabitants of Middleton and Little Bolton, the latter signed by 4,000 persons; also a petition from Huddersfield, upon, the noble earl observed, a subject connected with the New Poor-Law Act, containing a vindication of the conduct and character of certain magistrates of that town, against whom a calumny had been covertly communicated to the noble Lord the Secretary of State, and praying for the production of whatever correspondence had taken place between the said noble lord and certain individuals residing in Huddersfield, relative to the interference of the military at a meeting that had recently taken place in that neighbourhood.

"The petitions were then laid on the table.

"The Earl of RADNOR expressed his surprise that the noble earl should come down to that House, night after night, and put forth groundless statements, calculated to lead the public mind astray, and encourage agitation through the country against a measure which had been found, and was generally acknowledged, to have worked most beneficially.

"The Bishop of HEREFORD begged leave to state what had been also stated by a right rev. prelate near him, that as far as his knowledge and experience went, the clergy of the Established Church, many of whom had peculiar opportunities of watching the operation of the New Poor-Law Bill, having acted as Guardians under it, looked upon it as an excellent measure.

"Earl STANHOPE could only offer the signatures of many clergymen to these petitions in support of what he had stated. He knew also that it was the intention of several clergymen to preach against this law. A clergyman in this metropolis, a man of great learning and piety, had already done so, and he was fully convinced of what he had already stated, that if the existing law be not repealed, or greatly modified, in the next Parliament, consequences of the most disastrous nature would be the result.

"Lord BROUGHAM said, he had a better opinion of the good sense of the people of England than to suppose they would give

cause for any such disagreeable apprehensions."—*House of Lords*, July 15, 1837.

#### "GIVE IT A FAIR TRIAL."

##### THE RICH LAW AMENDMENT-BILL.

It is proposed to introduce to the Parliament, during the present Session, the project of a law, for the "Amendment" of the Wealthy Classes and Higher Orders,—for the improvement of their property, the raising of their morals, and the general good of the community, which ought to be the end and object of all legislation.

##### SECTION I.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONERS, &c.—*It is proposed*, to form a Board of three Commissioners; to give power to them to appoint at most fifty Assistant-Commissioners, and that such Commissioners shall be called, "*The Rich Men's Commissioners for the United Kingdom*," whose salaries shall be as under:—

	per ann.
The three Chief Commissioners ..	£10,000
The Assistant-Commissioners ....	£5,000

Salaries to be paid by a rate upon all property, real and funded, of all such persons as are rated at £30 yearly rental.

##### SECTION II.

DIVISIONS IN UNIONS AND APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIANS. — The kingdom to be divided into Unions for the purposes of this Act, and GUARDIANS to be chosen for each, as the Commissioners may appoint; *provided always*, that no such Guardian shall be above the rank of an "Independent Labourer," who has been educated in the New National Schools, and whose weekly wages shall not exceed 6s. The reason for appointing Guardians from this "order," is, that the poorer sections of society are much better judges of what is good for the rich than they are themselves.

##### SECTION III.

POWER TO NURSE OR SELL ESTATES. — The object of this law being to correct the misapplication of property and capital, it shall be enacted, that in every case where the wealthy overrun their means, and become what are called "poor gentlemen," the Commissioners shall have power to take their estates or property into their hands—to nurse or sell the same for the benefit of the Union, appointing to the former proprietors of the same, such allowance as is hereinafter provided, either as out-door relief, or in-door maintenance.



## SECTION IV.

**ERECTION OF UNION PALACES.**—*And be it further enacted*, that for the benefit of the “improvident” rich, there shall be provided UNION PALACES, conveniently situated and well provisioned with such things as the aforesaid Commissioners shall think proper. To render these palaces as “irksome” as possible, shall be the care of the aforesaid Commissioners. The rank, however, of the inmates must not be forgotten or disrespected. They must have a uniform dress, of the first cut and fashion; but one leg and arm of the coats and smalls must be longer than the other. They are each to have a carriage suitable to their rank, but the wheels are to be all differently painted, with wheels of different diameters, and they are to be drawn by cart-horses, with long tails.

## SECTION V.

**SEPARATION CLAUSES.**—By way of promoting a greater degree of conjugal happiness, and for the purpose of a “check” to future embarrassments, the ladies and gentlemen shall live in opposite wings of the palaces, being allowed to see each other through a golden grate once a-week, and their children shall also be provided for in separate apartments.

## SECTION VI.

**DIETARY AND TREATMENT.**—A *dietary* shall be appointed by the Commissioners, and shall in no case exceed twice 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per week. The “refractory” shall be subject to correction. A chaplain and chapel shall be provided; but, during service, the sexes shall be separated by a partition nine feet high; and if any of the ladies or gentlemen should make any disturbance by whispering, nodding, smiling, or sighing, they shall be liable to be locked up till they amend.

(Of course we anticipate many objections to this scheme, but it is undoubtedly one of those reforms most devoutly to be desired, and for want of which the *improved* estates of the gentry, makes Downing-street and Whitehall to swarm with beggars, who eat the bread of idleness and live upon the community. How desirable is it then, to throw them upon their own resources.)

## SECTION VII.

**POWER TO DISPLACE AND APPOINT STEWARDS.**—The Commissioners shall also have the power in all cases to appoint Stewards and Agents for the rich,

it being notorious that many of these officials are very improper characters. They shall also gradually strike off all gentlemen paupers and noble paupers, from the Pension List, Lord Brougham excepted.

## SECTION VIII.

**POWER OF GUARDIANS, &c.**—There shall also be power with the Commissioners to relax and to tighten (as the case may be) the “instructions” to the Guardians, giving them full discretion, and taking it away when they like.

The objections to this wholesome measure are, of course, from interested parties—either money-lenders or auctioneers. Some may say, that the rich had “the second mortgage on the land;” but the proper reply is, that it is *expedient* to take that right away for *public utility*. If any of the capitalists should be so rash as to “agitate” against this excellent measure of reform, the Commissioners shall have power to order to the spot, a division of the LONDON POLICE, or a battalion of HUSSARS. The transition may be painful, but the end must be good.

“GIVE IT ONLY A FAIR TRIAL.”

*God save the Queen.*

**UNION BASTILES.**—“Last evening, I met with a gentleman, who is building a house in this neighbourhood; he told me ‘that he met Lord Mostyn the other day. His lordship said, ‘How do you get on with your building?’ The gentleman replied, ‘I am at a stand still, I can get no masons.’ ‘How is that?’ inquired his lordship. ‘They are all *building houses for themselves*, my lord,’ said the gentleman with a sly wink. ‘Ah, indeed, *building houses for themselves*?’ exclaimed his lordship, ‘Where do they get the land and money?’ ‘My lord, they are building Union workhouses!’ announced my informant—and he gave his lordship a look, that made the noble appear very *childish*. The lord slunk off, and said no more. I shall not forget that saying soon—‘*They are building houses for themselves*.’ Yorkshire masons, hear that! and when you build Bastiles, repeat as you lay every stone, ‘WE ARE BUILDING HOUSES FOR OURSELVES!’”—*Oastler’s Letter to the “Northern Star,” dated from Rhyl, near St. Asaph, Oct. 6, 1838.*

**THE SOLDIERS AND THE POOR-LAW.**—“A poor old soldier had broken a

window of a public building with a stone ; he was taken before a magistrate, and asked what he had to say : he at once admitted he had done it, and told the magistrates if that stone had failed, he had others in his pocket. On being questioned as to his reasons, he said, ‘Sir, I am an old soldier, and the son of an old soldier ; I am starving, and now my poor father and mother are dead ; I have spent my strength, and the prime of my life, in fighting the battles of my country, I am destitute of the means of subsistence ; but I scorned to do a dishonourable act, and I determined to do just enough to send me to prison, where at least I should get bread. Do you think the soldiers will fight for a law which thus treats them when they are old ? Did you ever see a soldier, who was going abroad, take leave of his wife and children ? Oh ! what affection is there displayed, what prayers and wishes for their happiness, and when in the midst of battle, when the bullets are flying around, each perhaps the winged messenger of death, what are their thoughts, what are their prayers, but for all that is at home, dearer to them than life itself. Oh ! does not the soldier love his father, his mother, his wife, his children, his sister, and his sweetheart ? When the troops were called out at Bradford, and directed to fire on the people, an old soldier, who had been repeatedly in battle, and never shrunk from his duty, told me he never till that moment felt what it was to be a coward, but, said he, when I was about to fire, one man opposite to me bared his breast, and called on me to send it in there ; my heart failed me for the first time in my life ; I sunk the carbine, and that charge I carried home to the barracks. Government knows this is the feeling amongst the soldiers.’—*Mr. Stephens's Speech at the Norwich Meeting*, Monday, Nov. 5, 1838.

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MR. RICHARD OASTLER.

“There is no one, who has watched the proceedings of Mr. Richard Oastler, who must not be convinced that he is one of the most extraordinary political characters that has sprung up from amongst the ranks of the people in the present century. He is the first man within our knowledge who ever avowed himself an out-and-out Tory, and yet reached the very highest point of popularity amid the poorer classes of his fellow-countrymen. He has had the art, and the extraordinary skill, to be the de-

clared supporter of intolerant political principles, and yet has made himself the idol of the democracy, to whose well-being, liberty, and happiness, those principles were diametrically opposed. He has acted the part of Spartacus, and yet has declared that his very heart and soul were with the Senate, who were ready to plunge their country into ruin, rather than consent to the passing of an agrarian law. He is a leader of the *sans culottes*, and the devoted friend of the ancient regime. He is a Mirabeau, contending for the propriety of upholding the old abuses of courtly domination. He is, in short, a man who swears by the bishops, holds fast to the lords, and is ready to die for the maintenance of church-rates, organizing and arming the people to break out into open rebellion against the law of the land. Nothing can be more adverse than his principles and his practices, his professions and his proceedings, his sentiments and his acts. He is a Tory—a rank, ruthless Tory, and yet so complete and utter a mastery has he over the feelings, the affections, and the devotions of the people of the north, that he is called by them, and he is recognized by them, as ‘the King.’ It is no lip-loyalty which they tender to him ; for we believe that if contrary commands were issued from St. James’s, and from the abode in which Mr. Oastler is found, the desires of their liege lady, would be neglected, and the commands of Mr. Oastler obeyed ; so that it may be said that in Lancashire, and Yorkshire, ‘The King’s name is a tower of strength,’ which they of the adverse faction, the *Queen’s*, would be utterly destitute of.

“It may well be asked, how comes it that a private individual—a man comparatively in a humble situation of life, happens to be possessed of such extraordinary power as that which is wielded by Mr. Richard Oastler ? The reader may be well assured that the subject of the present article has not attained it without his being gifted with great talents. We have heard many men address public assemblies, but with the exception of Mr. O’Connell, and Mr. Steele, in Ireland, we never yet knew one to possess the art of moving, exciting, and controlling the passions of a mighty multitude, like to Mr. Oastler. He has, in the first place, one of the most powerful voices we ever heard, which he sends forth with all the deep-toned strength and sustained energy of a full-pealing organ. With this, he



has a great command of well-arranged language, and he has a thorough knowledge of all the topics which he knows lie nearest to the hearts of the poorer classes of Englishmen. No one can describe more eloquently the happiness and comforts which once dwelt around the homesteads of the contented peasantry, and none can, with equal powers, depict the misery and squalidness which now abide there. He draws pictures of humble bliss, which he clothes with all the glowing colours of imagination, and he contrasts them immediately with scenes which require no fancy to exaggerate them. Had he not recommended the people 'to arm,' he would have been a benefactor to his country. As it is, we fear that he has done irreparable mischief, for he has it in his power to do as much mischief as he might have done good. To those who have never heard him address, that which is called a mob, nor seen how his address was received, it is impossible to give an adequate idea of the gifts and talents of this very astonishing man. It is, or rather, it *was*, a common practice to associate the name of Mr. Oastler with that of the Rev. Mr. Stephens, and of Mr. Feargus O'Connor. As well associate Bibulus with Julius Cæsar, or Lentulus with Octavius, as for an instant to compare O'Connor, or Stephens, with Oastler.

"Both Stephens and O'Connor are clever men *in their way*; but at all times, and even *now*, their popularity lay in the hands of Mr. Oastler, and he could in an instant crush them into their original insignificance. Supposing that there was a quarrel between the triumvirate, we can well fancy how easily the poor, weakly, schoolboyish sentences of Stephens, and the noisy splutter of O'Connor, would be lost and swallowed up in the lionlike roars of 'the King,' before an English popular assembly. We do not know what may be the feelings of Mr. Oastler towards Mr. O'Connor, but this we are sure of, that he cannot but contrast his own generous identification of himself, and all his opinions and sentiments, with those of Mr. Stephens, when that gentleman was first arrested in Manchester, with O'Connor's flight from Birmingham, when some of his co-conventionalists were, for the first time, brought under the terror of the law. We conclude from this, that between two such characters, there can be but little cordial sympathy or genuine feeling. We call attention to this circum-

stance, because it is a common thing to identify them; when the fact is, that there is only one point on which they agree—the abuse of the New Poor-Law. Mr. Oastler declares his utter separation from the convention—from all its views and objects—and if we are not mistaken, we believe he never took any part in their proceedings, nor even so much as visited them, even though he was in London while they were sitting.

"There are many, we know, who doubt the sincerity of Mr. Oastler. We are not amongst the number. We believe him to be perfectly sincere, because he has been always consistent. We never doubt a man who adheres firmly to that principle with which he has first commenced; and on the same ground that we believe Oastler sincere, we doubt the sincerity of Phillpotts, when he abuses the Catholics; and of Peel, when he says he will adhere to the Reform Bill. Mr. Oastler may be, and we believe, is, fanatical in his hatred of the New Poor-Law Bill; for he will not admit that there is any good in it, from the first clause to the last. We do not adhere to the abuses of that Bill—we wish to see them reformed; but then we cannot go the length—the mischievous and the dangerous length—which Mr. Oastler has unfortunately gone, of getting rid of its provisions by force of arms. While we condemn Mr. Oastler for doing much mischief in this respect, we cannot deny him the merit to which we think him fairly entitled, that he is perfectly sincere in his wish to get rid of the New Poor-Law, by any means—even by civil war, if necessary; for we are quite sure, that in such a cause, he is ready to lose his life in the field, or, if a prisoner, willingly to yield it up, on the scaffold. On this point his head is wrong, but his heart is right. His Koran is the Old Poor Law; and to establish it, he has all the fanaticism, devotion, and dauntless bravery of a Mahommedan.

"It may be perceived, notwithstanding his rebellious projects as far as the Poor-Law is concerned, that Mr. Oastler is a great favourite with the Tory newspapers. They laud him as much as the Chartist journals; but with better reason, for there is no man who has done such good service to the Tories as Mr. Oastler. It was with him originated the plan of inciting the population to procure arms—a plan which, for Chartist purposes, was taken up; and, with characteristic clumsiness,

so mismanaged by Mr. Feargus O'Connor, that it only brought odium on his cause, and was near throwing, from the fear of convulsion, the entire country under the government of the Tories. In this respect, Mr. Oastler showed his superior judgment, and his commanding dexterity over Mr. O'Connor. 'The King's' men committed no violence—the Chartists did—hence the one escaped punishment, while the others are now pining in prison. And yet there are some who still think, that Mr. Oastler is nothing better, nothing superior to a Feargus O'Connor!—Bah!"

"SENATORIENSIS."

—*Bell's New Weekly Messenger*, Oct. 20, 1839.

[This is rather a clever sketch, but I do not, in the remotest degree, subscribe to the writer's ill opinion of such men as the Bishop of Exeter, O'Connor, and Stephens.—G. R. W. B.]

POOR-LAW PLACE-HUNTING.—"The Irish have become of late inveterate place-hunters. Upwards of 7,000 applications have been made for situations under the Poor-Law Act. For the office of Assistant-Commissioner there were 800 candidates. You may therefore imagine the disappointment and indignation of the latter at the appointment of five Englishmen. Several of the unfortunates, who are residents in Dublin, have been going about the city like roaring lions. I verily believe, if Nicholls crossed their path, they would sacrifice him on the spot, and devour him, body and bones."—*The Record*, Oct. 1, 1838.

#### THE NEW POOR-LAW NOT A NEW INVENTION OF THE ENEMY.

"The 43rd of Elizabeth was passed in 1601. A couple of years, or so, afterwards, a number of individuals in the southern counties of England, landlords, wealthy farmers, and the like, conspired together, and drew up certain queries, ten in number, and forwarded the same to be answered by an eminent legal authority of that day, *Sergeant Snigge*. This gentleman was a celebrated special pleader at the bar in Elizabeth's reign; was contemporary with Coke, Plowden, Glanvil, &c., and was knighted and made a judge by James I. The following are question 9, and the learned Sergeant's answer—his noble and indignant answer:—

"*Farming the Poor*.—Question 9. 'Some of the most *wealthy* farmers in the parish have devised a *skilful mode* by

which *all the trouble* of executing this Act might be avoided. They have proposed, that we shall erect a prison in the parish, and then give notice in the neighbourhood, that if any persons are disposed to farm the poor of this parish, they do give in sealed proposals on a certain day, at the lowest price at which they will take them off our hands, and that they will be authorised to refuse relief to any one, unless he will be shut up in the aforesaid prison. The proposers of this plan conceive that there will be found, in the adjoining counties, persons, who, being *unwilling to labour*, and not *possessing substance or credit* to take a farm or ship, so as to *live without labour*, may be induced to *make a very advantageous offer to the parish*. If any of the *poor perish under the contractor's care*, *the sin will lie at his door*, as the parish *will have done their duty to them*. We are, however, apprehensive that the present Act will not warrant a *prudential* measure of this kind; but you are to learn, that the rest of the freeholders of the county, and of the adjoining county of B—, will very readily join in instructing their members to propose an Act to enable the parish to contract with a person to lock up and work the poor; and to declare, that if any poor person shall refuse to be so locked up and worked, he shall be entitled to no relief. This, it is hoped, will prevent persons in distress from wanting relief, and be the means of *keeping down parishes*."

"*Mr. Sergeant Snigge's Reply*.—"It is a just suspect of the parish, that such a measure as you allude to, will not be warranted by the Act. And I deem too highly of the wisdom and integrity of the High Court of Parliament to surmise, that they will give their sanction to any such doings. Should any ever be *so weak and wicked as to propound*, or *even to vote for such a law*, they would be answerable in conscience, not only for every poor person that may die, but also for every instance of suffering, or of depravity, in consequence of it. It is true, that in case the necessities of life be lowered after the contract has been entered into, the contractor may thrive, and yet the poor may not suffer; but, if those articles rise in price, it is not possible for a *needy vagabond* to supply the difference. In such hands the poor must inevitably perish. Again, I should observe, that when under sickness, or temporary distress, a poor man is to be sent *hopeless*



into such a place of confinement, his spirit must, in most instances, be broken, and he become a burden to his parish for life."

#### SYMPTOMS OF GIVING UP.

"Mr. WALTER begged to ask the noble lord, the Secretary for the Colonies, when he meant to proceed with the Poor-Law Amendment-Act.

"Lord J. RUSSELL was understood to name Thursday, but he could not say positively that it would come on on that day.

"Mr. WALTER—Do I understand the noble lord to say that it will not come on on Thursday.

"Lord J. RUSSELL—Certainly not on Thursday."—*House of Commons*, May 18, 1841.

Captain POLHILL, seeing no fewer than 37 orders of the day upon the paper, wished to know whether it was the intention of the noble lord, the Secretary for the Colonies, to proceed to-night with the Poor-Law Amendment-Act?

"Lord J. RUSSELL said he would state what he meant to do when he arrived at the orders of the day.

"Mr. WALTER was sorry to renew the application he had formerly made, as to the course the noble lord (J. Russell) intended to take with reference to the New Poor-Law, not having distinctly heard his answer to the question just put. Would the noble lord be so good as to say on what day he proposed to proceed with the Poor-Law Act?

"Lord J. RUSSELL begged to say, that having formerly stated to the right hon. baronet opposite (Sir R. Peel), with respect to the case of Mr. McLeod, that he believed it had been moved into one of the federal courts, he had now to state, from a communication received more recently, that the case had not been moved into a federal court, but into the Supreme Court of New York; and that it would come on for discussion on the 3rd of May, on a writ of *habeas corpus*. With respect to the Poor-Law Amendment Bill, it was his intention to have stated, before going into any other orders of the day, that it was not his intention to proceed with that bill during the present session of Parliament. (Loud cheers from both sides of the House.) \* \* \* \*

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"Mr. WAKLEY said, it had been said, turn out the Poor-Law Ministry; but

where was he to get an Anti-Poor-Law Ministry? The noble lord had announced to-night that he would not go on with the Poor-Law Amendment Bill. (Hear, hear.) He was delighted to hear it; it gave him the greatest satisfaction, and it would be heard with delight by thousands and thousands of his countrymen. Would the right hon. baronet opposite bring forward the Poor-Law Amendment Bill? He (Mr. Wakley) thought not; but the right hon. baronet had advocated the measure. The right hon. baronet had told the House, that when he was in office he would take a careful review of the circumstances of the country. Was there anything to prevent the right hon. baronet from doing that while he was out of office. ('Hear, hear,' and a laugh.) Assuredly the right hon. baronet, being now much less incumbered by applications, by deputations, and by business of every kind, had a much better opportunity of taking that careful review which he had promised when he should obtain the seals of office. \*

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"Lord J. RUSSELL wished to say, with reference to the approbation which the hon. gentleman had expressed of his postponement of the Poor-Law Amendment Bill, that that postponement was owing to the present state of public business. Having before the House the questions relating to the Budget, with other questions which had excited a very great degree of interest, it would have been useless to proceed with the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill. In the first place, there would have been a protracted discussion without any final result; and, in the next place, with the expectation that every hon. member seemed to have that he was to account for his conduct at the hustings, he thought there would have been a great many motions and a great many speeches made, intended rather for the hustings than for any useful purpose of legislation. (Hear, hear.) He certainly thought it would be better not to proceed in the present state of affairs with the bill; but if the hon. gentleman thought that that announcement was made in consequence of his having at all altered his opinion of the measure, or any opinions he had given regarding particular parts of it, he begged at once to say that there had been no such change. (Cheers.) On one motion, of which the hon. gentleman himself had given notice, he had indeed given no opinion, and he should have discussed it, if the bill had come on, but he would take

leave to say, that whether those of his (Lord J. Russell's) side of the House were destined still to govern the country, or any other persons should occupy their seats, he believed the principles of the Poor-Law Amendment-Bill to be sound, to be such as must recommend themselves to any government and any Parliament of this country, to be those on which any salutary system of Poor-Laws must be administered. (Hear, hear.)"—*House of Commons*, May 24, 1841.

GILBERTIZE THE NEW POOR-LAW ; A FRESH PLAN, IN A LETTER TO SIR ROBERT PEEL: BEING AN ANSWER TO HIS "*I desire to know what system is to be adopted.*" (Speech, Feb. 8, 1841).—"Such is the title-page of a most praiseworthy and pithy work recently (July, 1841,) published by the Rev. Edward Duncombe, Rector of Newton Kyme, Tadcaster, Yorkshire, brother of T. S. Duncombe, Esq., M.P. for Finsbury, nephew of Lord Feversham, and a great favourite and frequent correspondent of the Author of the *Book of the Bastiles*. Mr. Duncombe's scriptures antagonistic to the infamous New Poor-Law, show him to be one of the most enthusiastic and noble-minded of men. He is a man of no party, but he has evidently chosen that "better part," which hereafter will give what the world cannot give—*happiness*. His independence of character is only inferior to his religious and moral sense of duty—of doing the thing which is right, and letting the crude crowd clap, or hiss, as they feel disposed. He is as chivalrous as he is charitable, and just such a Parmenio as every living kicking Alexander of us would wish to be, were he not already the son and heir of Jupiter Ammon. In his present publication, which is by far the most *readsome* that has yet appeared on the vexatious question, he virtually cuts Sir Robert Peel's expediency and sophistry props from under him, and, with much argument, authorities, and appropriate applications, peels the very flesh from off the Tamworth town baronet's bones, until he "shows" quite raw—a *Johnny Raw* in such "perilous matters" as those of the New Poor-Law. His interpretation of what he (Mr. D.) intends by the phrase "Gilbertize the New Poor-Law," is, *Parochialize*, Constitutionalize, *Christianize* the New Poor-Law; and the statistics and favourable mention which he chronicles in behalf of the Gilbert system,

prove that the next best thing to utterly abolishing the fiendful Act, would be, to use his term, to '*Gilbertize*' it. He proves, beyond contradiction, the merits of the Gilbert over the Somerset-house system by the authenticated tabular illustration, that while, under the jurisdiction of the latter in Yorkshire, there is only one poor-house inmate to 1,400 acres; in Surrey, under the predominance of the latter, there is one in-door pauper to every 28 acres!!!

Every politician, and Poor-Law meddling man should purchase and peruse this work; and every such person who, having purchased and perused it, and doesn't admire, and love, and like it, must be an unmitigated beast of burden—a descendant of the popular *pushing kine* recorded in Scripture. It is published by Whittaker, London; Vincent, Oxford; Sunter, York; and all booksellers; and the price is but 2s. 6d.

G. R. WYTHEN BAXTER.

THE VICTIM OF THE BOON!—"When friends and connexions forsake the poor outcast—when the father, who has cherished her in infancy, and has watched with pride and affection the opening bloom of her womanhood, blots out from his mind the name which has become associated with ignominy and disgrace, who will dare to deny that she still has, or ought to have, nature's claim—woman's claim—on the author of her wrongs, or, if you will, the partner of her crime? But the Poor-Law Amendment-Act steps in, rends asunder the last link that binds her to life and to society, and flings her upon the world to perish, or to live by means in comparison with which perishing were a mercy. Shall we wonder if woman's nature sink in the trial—if even a mother's love, which will bear so much, and sacrifice so much, wither and dry up in her bosom? Shall we wonder if, in the dark hour, reason rock in her seat, and the gloomy suggestions of despair arise, and insanity point to murder and infanticide, as the only refuge for the law's victim from the accumulated horrors which surround her."—*Mr. G. A. Young's Speech at the Anniversary of the passing of the Vestries' Act, White Conduit Tavern, July 31, 1839.*—[This extract is taken from one of the *most eloquent and humane* speeches which has been spoken on the New Poor-Law. Mr. G. A. Young's head and heart are *well worth* his being proud of.—G. R. W. B.]



## POOR-LAW SONNETS.

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### THE WIFE'S REMONSTRANCE.

Good master Parson Justice: man and wife  
Were I and Simon by your Honour join'd  
Some thirty years ago. No mortal coin'd  
The curse: 'twas taken from the Book of Life,  
On those who part us. Methinks Satan's knife  
Alone can cut that knot. Hath he purloin'd  
The page, and you consent? Or is't enjoined  
That ye be ministers of love or strife?

O, Simon, let us lie down in one grave!  
We ask for bread; they offer worse than stones,  
We'll take with us the blessing that God gave—  
Hard law, with little care about our bones—  
And not e'en death shall part us; for we trust  
To rise again together from one dust.

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### THE RUINED MOTHER.

O cursed is the law that lends its aid  
To full-blown villainy to crush the weak!  
Poor Simon's daughter Jane, a flow'ret meek,  
Alas! no wife, a wretched mother made;  
Scorn'd in her poverty and shame, dismay'd,  
Slew both herself and babe. Young Farmer Sleek  
Pass'd by while they in the cold trench were laid!  
"It broke his heart?" "He had no heart to break."

"Nor would maintain his own?" "It is the law:  
Young Farmer Sleek approved it, and could quote;  
Nor Parson Conscience there could find a flaw.  
He awed the Vestries; gave a liberal vote;  
Brawl'd for Reforms—There ends the tale. Yet more—  
Young Farmer Sleek is Guardian of the Poor."

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### PARISH SICK AND PARISH DOCTOR.

"Poor Simon's sick." "Then for the doctor send."  
"The Union doctor? He lives far away—  
Seven miles, and has seven parishes they say,  
And his own private practice to attend.  
Besides, sick Simon has no idle friend,  
Where all must work; nor has he pence to pay;  
Nor comes the doctor without order penn'd  
By th' overseer—and this is market-day.  
"Then there's for med'cine fourteen miles to go,  
As if the poor had lackeys everywhere,  
And the relieving officer will know  
When Simon's dead. He should have better fare.  
And Simon dreams they're apt to cut the thread,  
Who farm the parish sick three farthings by the head."

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## THE UNION WORKHOUSE.

Nature was strong, and Simon did not die ;  
 He had no Union doctor ; but the poor,  
 When he was up, and sunn'd him at his door,  
 Or came to chat, or chatted passing by :  
 And sometimes brighter beam'd the old man's eye,  
 When the good parson kindly cross'd his floor.  
 Thus life with neighbourhood and kindness wore  
 A smiling look, and cheer'd him on to die.

Then came the Union law. Drawn in a cart  
 To a far distant workhouse—there confined ;  
 No neighbour to drop in and cheer his heart ;  
 No village sunshine on his face—he pined—  
 Without a crime condemn'd—imprison'd—died—  
 And thus th' unconscious law one charity supplied.

## THE POOR MAN'S BURIAL.

Ho ! contract coffins for the parish poor,  
 Eight shillings each, complete with shroud and nails !  
 " An please your Honour stop within the rails,  
 Poor Simon's scarce will reach the big church door."  
 " Not take him into church ! " " It will not hold,  
 Tho' we have patch'd it up." " I hear no bell."  
 " Your Honour, the New Laws won't have it toll'd."  
 " What ! stint a poor man's soul a parting knell ? "  
 " Go, tell his Lordship that old Simon's dead,  
 And now they bury him, whose honest hands  
 Plough'd, sow'd, and reap'd—his Lordship ate the bread ;  
 Bid him repeal harsh laws, that Heaven his lands  
 May bless—God's poor not unregarded sleep ;  
 Tell him new hands may sow, and God gave all to reap."

## AN ANTI-NEW POOR-LAW TOP-KNOT.

" It's a pity 'tis pass'd, that pauper wo !  
 So rife with murder, poisonings, hearts broke—rack !  
 Authors of England ! why are ye so slow ?  
 Gentlemen of England ! why are ye so slack ?  
 Awake ! arise ! expose ! ward off the blow,  
 Ere yet it comes down thundering on your back—  
 Let its cruelties continue, and grow like weeds,  
 And I can only say, *Look to your title-deeds !* "—DON JUAN, JUNIOR.\*

\* Mr. Oastler has adopted this New Poor-Law stanza from G. R. Wythen Baxter's *Don Juan, Junior*, as a top-piece for his admirable Anti-New Poor-Law letters, which weekly appear in the columns of the *Champion* newspaper. In the hands of the "good old Tory king" it bids fair to outrival the 'Hereditary bondsmen' tweedle-dee, tweedle-dum top-not of Daniel O'Connell. It is seldom living poets have their verse quoted from ; and, in the present instance, Mr. Oastler, by enlisting in his service the stanza from 'Don Juan, Junior,' has conferred *special* honour on Mr. G. R. Wythen Baxter."—*Sheffield Iris*, April 14, 1840.



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